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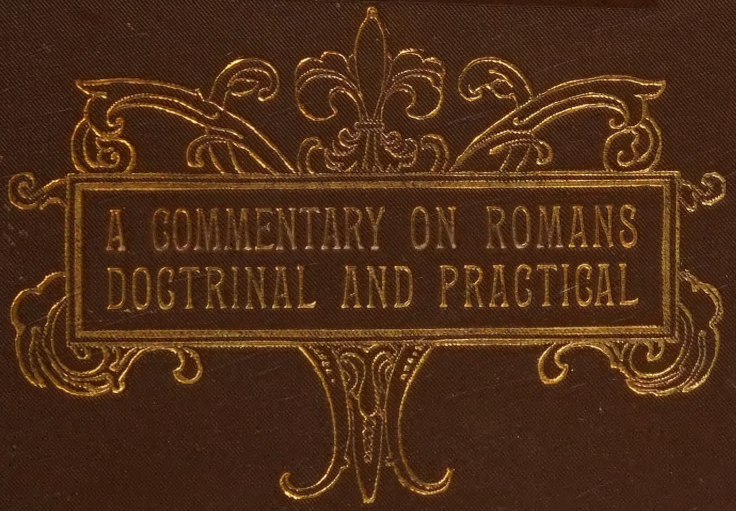

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A COMMENTARY

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

BY

S. R. HARSHMAN

(Author of "Sermons on Familiar Subjects" and "Christian Citizenship and Other Sermons")

EVANGELIST

AND

Pastor of The Church of Jesus Christ
In Sullivan, Illinois

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PREFACE

I HAVE for some time felt a desire to prepare this work, though conscious of the lack of equipment for the task. But I have long realized that the commentaries extant are unsatisfactory, and fail in some respects to give the mind of the Spirit. In some respects these commentaries are all that could be desired; but they fail to bring out clearly the doctrines taught. I shall attempt no emendations of the text, nor criticisms upon the translation. My knowledge of Greek is too narrow to fit me for such a task. Nor am I able to give the various readings as found in different manuscripts and versions. The reader will find such information in more pretentious works, prepared by much abler authors. The common Greek text and the authorized version of the New Testament will be accepted without any attempt at criticism. This work is intended to be doctrinal and practical only. While some knowledge of the original is a great help in determining the real meaning and intention of the writer, happily no knowledge

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of ancient languages, nor great critical ability is essential to the understanding of the doctrines of the New Testament. Where I have consciously borrowed from others I have given them the proper credit. This work is not a compilation. I have done my own thinking, and whatever excellencies or defects the work may contain are all my own. I trust that spiritual men may find this book to be helpful to them. With this hope I send it forth.

S. R. HARSHMAN.

SULLIVAN, ILL., *Jan. 30, 1903.*

INTRODUCTION

THE apostle Paul, the author of the Epistle to the Romans, is the most eminent character of the Christian age. He was born in Tarsus, the chief city of the province of Cilicia, in Asia Minor. It was made a free city by the emperor Augustus some time before the apostle was born. This made any free person, born in that city, a Roman citizen. As such, he was free from the tribute paid by others and had many rights not belonging to the subject peoples. He could not be condemned without a trial in which he could meet his accusers face to face. He could not be bound or scourged or otherwise maltreated until condemned. He had the right of appeal from the decision of the consular, and other provincial courts, to Rome, and to Cæsar himself. Many purchased this freedom by paying great sums to the Roman government, but Saul of Tarsus was freeborn. The fact that St. Paul was often scourged and beaten with rods, shows that he did not stand upon his rights as a Roman. Saul is called a young

man at the time of the martyrdom of Stephen, and it is probable that he was born about the time of the beginning of the Christian era. Though born in Tarsus, he seems to have been brought up at Jerusalem, receiving his education at the feet of Gamaliel, that most eminent doctor of the law. He was devout and zealous, and in his state of unbelief became a persecutor of the infant church. After his commission as an Apostle of Christ he became at least equally zealous in preaching that gospel he once despised; and he did more in establishing the church of Christ than any other apostle, if not more than all of them together. His epistles have been of inestimable value to the church in all succeeding ages. He was the only one among the twelve who systematized Christian theology; so that he is credited by some of the enemies of Christianity with being the real author of that system of religion. He himself speaks of the abundance of the revelations which he received, and he seems to have had a more clear and comprehensive understanding of the Christian system than any of his cotemporaries. He was able to more fully divest himself of the prejudices of his Jewish education than any other of the apostles. This may have been partially the result of his special mission to the Gentiles, when such freedom from prejudice was absolutely essential.

The family of Saul of Tarsus was probably of some consequence since he was able to get his education in Jerusalem. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, from which the first King of Israel was chosen, whence probably his name. He declares that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, meaning no doubt, that he was an enthusiastic Jew; a violent partisan of his religion. As touching the law he was a Pharisee, the straitest sect among the Jews, and the most zealous. As touching the righteousness which was in the law, he was blameless. That he was recognized as a man of ability is evidenced by the important commissions which were entrusted to so young a man. His prospects of worldly preferment were bright and flattering. But all these things which were gain to him, these he counted loss for Christ. Being chosen to fill the place of Judas, the traitor, in the apostolic college, the Lord manifested himself to him and called him by name, and gave him his commission from his own mouth. He was also taught by the Lord directly all gospel truth, and he himself declares his independence of all the other apostles, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen the Lord Jesus?" He is careful to establish his entire freedom from human teaching, and to declare that his gospel was not taught him by man. As to his personal qualities,

his second name Paul, would indicate that he was small of stature. And to this agrees his mention of the sneers of his enemies that his bodily presence was weak; so also the fact that he was called Mercurius, while Barnabas, who was probably of imposing presence was called Jupiter by those Pagans who mistook them for heathen gods. Besides, Paul was the chief speaker. Mercurius, though an inferior deity, was the messenger of the gods. It seems also that St. Paul was not an orator. His enemies said that his speech was contemptible. This referred, no doubt, to his manner of speaking rather than to his matter; for they acknowledged his letters to be weighty and powerful. He also had an infirmity in his flesh which he mentions in his letter to the Galatians, which they are said not to have despised, but were ready to pluck out their own eyes and give them to him. This has caused a suspicion that his infirmity was weakness of the eyes. His use of an amanuensis in writing some of his epistles confirms this suspicion. This would account for his inability to distinguish the High Priest in his trial before the Sanhedrim. This is, I think, a different matter from his thorn in the flesh, which he sought to have removed. This thorn, a minister of Satan buffeting him, was probably a person rather than a physical infirmity; though it may refer to the latter. His rudeness of

speech, which he confesses to, may have resulted from his speaking Greek, which was not his native tongue. He could speak Hebrew and Hebrew Syriac of the common people, but he may not have been in the habit of speaking Greek before beginning gospel work. His lack of popularity as a speaker was due no doubt, at least in part, to some peculiarity in his style, but it may have been also due to his unwillingness to pander to the vitiated taste of his hearers. The style of oratory of that time was labored and bombastic; grandiloquence rather than eloquence. This style of oratory was assiduously cultivated by public speakers, and carried to such extremes as to border on the grotesque. It was artificial and as far as possible removed from the simple and natural. It was entirely inappropriate to the preaching of the gospel; and so was repudiated by the apostle. He declares that he came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom when preaching the gospel. This simple, unaffected style of speaking was not appreciated by auditors accustomed to the popular style of oratory, and seemed to them contemptible. His recorded speeches, however, are models of their kind, however faulty their delivery may have been; and the effect produced upon his hearers causes the suspicion that his enemies greatly magnified his oratorical defects. His

speech before King Agrippa could scarcely be improved on and the effect of it was immediate and powerful.

His enemies confessed the power of his writings. "His letters," say they, "are weighty and powerful." Of this fact we have personal experience. Handicapped as he was by physical defects, rudeness of speech, and his defiance of the popular taste, he yet by his untiring zeal, his vast labors, his ability and willingness to adapt himself to the ignorance and weakness of others, and by his extraordinary abilities, sanctified wholly to the service of God, became the chief instrument in God's hands, in laying the foundations of the new religion. In doing this work he suffered extraordinary persecutions. In II Cor. XI-cap., he gives a summary of his persecutions and sufferings. Speaking of the false teachers who exalted themselves and depreciated Paul and his labors, and comparing himself and them, in what he calls "foolish boasting," he says, "Are they ministers of Christ, I am more. In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by

mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak! Who is offended and I burn not!" What a catalogue of sufferings and labors is here enumerated! All these things seem to have been necessary, lest he should overvalue himself because of the abundance of the revelations given him. The hatred and scorn of the world, the privations and hardships which he underwent, saved him from spiritual pride, through the abounding grace of God. In like manner must men suffer whom God deigns greatly to honor, by extraordinary revelations of his truth, and of his favor.

Who is willing to be honored of God at such a cost?

The labors and sufferings, the cares and trials of the apostle to the Gentiles probably tended to shorten his life; for he did not live to become a very old man, though he calls himself in one instance, Paul the aged. We cannot determine his age with any great precision, but we have certain data from which we can approximate to the truth upon that point. At

the time of the martyrdom of Stephen, Saul was called a young man. That would mean that he was between thirty and forty years old. This was shortly after Christ's death which took place in the year thirty-three of this era. St. Paul was beheaded under the reign of Nero, which extended from 54 to 68 A. D. It is probable that his death or martyrdom occurred near the end of Nero's reign after he had become cruel and bloodthirsty. If St. Paul was thirty-five at the time of Stephen's death, and died in the last year of Nero's reign he would have been but seventy years old. It is probable that that is near the truth. He began to feel the infirmities of age creeping on him before this time, or he would not have called himself aged. Until he was past eighty years of age, John Wesley declares of himself that he felt no signs of age. This was remarkable.

St. Paul on the other hand grew old at seventy. He had much to contend with. He not only incurred the enmity of the heathen whose gods he discredited, and of the Jews whose religion he made antiquated, but also of many who were called Christians, because they could not understand his rejection of Jewish forms and ceremonies. These Jewish Christians could not wholly divorce themselves from the religion of their fathers, but undertook to make Christianity a new patch upon the old

garment of Judaism. St. Paul understood more clearly than any other man of his time the distinction between the two religions, and the danger of a mixture of the two; and being the apostle to the Gentiles, he magnified his office by insisting upon these differences that he might preserve the spirituality of the Gentile churches. This brought on a conflict which lasted his lifetime through; but he never faltered nor wavered. His attempt to conciliate those Christians who were zealous for the law, when he visited Jerusalem, only got him into trouble and failed of its object. Reviewing this conflict just before his departure to Paradise, he exclaimed; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." As has been said, he suffered martyrdom under Nero, and being a Roman citizen, he was decapitated instead of being crucified. The Epistle to the Romans is the most profound theological work extant. I have imagined that St. Peter had it especially in mind when he wrote concerning St. Paul's writings that some of them were hard to be understood, which those who were unlearned and unstable, wrested to their own destruction. Certain it is, that no other part of the sacred writings is more relied on to prove all sorts of opinions and doctrines. No other part is so variously explained by commentators and theologians. There

are a few passages in this epistle which are probably inexplicable; at least, they have never been so explained as to produce certainty that the mind of the Spirit is understood. But generally, I think, the epistle may be satisfactorily explained so as to make it consistent with itself and with other scriptures. The epistle seems to have been systematically planned, and the plan may be briefly stated as follows:

1st. The introduction including a description of the condition of the Pagan world. Chapter I.

2nd. A demonstration of the equally lost condition of both Jew and Gentile. Chapters II and III.

3rd. The Doctrine of Justification by faith. Chapters IV and V.

4th. The doctrine of original sin and our salvation from it through Christ. Chapters VI, VII and VIII.

5th. A demonstration of the fulfillment of the promises made to God's ancient people notwithstanding the rejection of the greater part of the Jewish nation. Chapters IX, X and XI.

6th. Exhortations to Holy living. Chapter XII.

7th. The duty of subjection to human government. Chapter XIII.

8th. The impropriety of Christians judging one another concerning things indifferent, and the duty of the strong to bear with the weak. Chapters XIV and XV.

9th. Salutations. Chapter XVI.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

CHAPTER I.

1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the grace of God,

2. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

The apostle here calls himself a servant (doulos) of Jesus Christ. The Greek word signifies a bond-servant or slave. God's people are free men because delivered from the bondage of sin; but they are the Lord's bond-servants, having been bought with a price. He was called to be an apostle, or rather called an apostle; the words "to be" being supplied by the translators. He refers, no doubt, to his call by the Lord Jesus. The term "apostle" signifies an envoy, an ambassador. The seventy, called evangelists, were also messengers but not in so extensive a sense as the twelve. An evangelist is a gospeller, or gospel preacher.

3. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4. And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Both the mother and the reputed father of Jesus were of the lineage of David. Christ was born in Bethlehem, the city of David; living afterward in Nazareth gave Him the name of Nazarene.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead was a most conclusive proof of the genuineness of His claim that He was the Son of God. It proved the truth of His assertion that He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again. The primitive Christians made much of the fact of the resurrection, and those calling themselves Christians who deny the literalness of Christ's resurrection would make Him out an impostor. His taking His life up again was as literal and actual as was His death.

5. By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

6. Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

In one sense, all who hear the gospel are called. But some, represented by the "wayside," upon which some seed fell, do not hear God's call. To some "our gospel is hid." But these are exceptional cases. But not all who are really called, who recognize

God's voice, are actually chosen. Whether they who are called are chosen or not depends upon the concurrence of their own wills, not upon any Divine decree. The hearer himself decides whether his call shall be effectual or not.

7. To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul had never been in Rome; and as he declares that he never builded upon another man's foundation, many of the saints in Rome must have been his own converts. Rome was the metropolitan city and was constantly visited by people from all parts of the empire, and many who went there remained.

8. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

10. Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

11. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12. That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

The Christians in Rome suffered great persecutions at times, and these trials of their faith probably caused their fidelity to become so celebrated. But

Nero's persecutions had not yet begun. He accused the Christians of setting the city of Rome on fire, a crime which he was suspected of secretly conniving at, and then the saints were horribly persecuted by him in order to cover up his own guilt. They were crucified, burned alive, cast to the wild beasts in the arena, and otherwise put to death. Thousands afterwards perished in the catacombs under that city.

The apostle was, no doubt, conscious of his ability to impart spiritual benefit to the believers in Rome, but he would not assume superiority, but qualified his words by speaking of a mutual benefit that was to be enjoyed by association with them. This shows how careful he was to avoid offence; though when his authority was questioned he would defend it. This absence of all assumption of superiority is characteristic of a great mind and of great grace.

13. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

That the apostle was aquainted with many of the saints in Rome is evident from the salutations in the last chapter of this epistle, but he had met them in other places. He desires fruit among them; that is, he desires to make converts in Rome itself. His burning desire to save souls would not let him rest

while there was opportunity for doing good. He did not foresee, however, how God would gratify his desire to visit Rome; that he should first visit that city a prisoner.

14. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

The Greeks called all other nations Barbarians, so that the Romans themselves were Barbarians to the Greeks. Naturally the apostle owed no man any service, nor was he under any obligation to labor for any man without compensation. But for Christ's sake he becomes the servant of all, and debtor to any man who needed his services. As he declares in another place, he was free from all men, but became the servant of all, for Christ's sake! This was true not only of the great apostle to the Gentiles, but is equally true of every gospel minister. Wheresoever he finds a human being who needs the gospel he owes him his service in preaching that gospel. For Christ's sake he is every man's servant without money and without fee. He who stops to arrange for compensation for his labor shows himself to be constrained, not by the love of Christ, but by the love of filthy lucre. God's ministers are debtors to all of every language, race and color.

15. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The apostle intimates here that he imagines someone might impute his failure to visit Rome hitherto to shame; that he was ashamed to preach the gospel of the despised Nazarene in the centre of culture and refinement. It is such an imputation that he here denies. For though he was preaching the gospel of one accounted a malefactor, who was put to the death of a slave upon a Roman cross, yet His gospel was nothing to be ashamed of, since it was a success. It is the *power of God*. Not merely the power of eloquence, or of logic, or of human persuasion, but the power of God, in that it is preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; it pierces like a sword, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. A gospel destitute of this Divine element is in word only, and too weak to do lost men any good. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It really saves men from sin; for if they are not saved from sin, they are not saved at all. "He shall save His people from their sins." He came to make an end of sin and to bring in everlasting righteousness. The gospel is God's appointed means for accomplishing this end. "It hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save

them that believe." But men have lost confidence in the power of the gospel to save, and are substituting other means. In fact, many deny the possibility of accomplishing the design of the gospel, and are content with much less. Nevertheless it is still true that the gospel is the power of God, and that it saves from sin those who believe it. Men who preach the gospel the apostle preached still find it efficacious, and are content to depend on it alone to save sinners.

17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

It is not only true that sinners are justified by faith, but those who are justified live by faith. This is a fact generally confessed but seldom understood. It is not by obedience believers stand or live, nor by the use of means of grace; but the life they now live, they live by the faith of the Son of God. Faith alone unites them to God, the source of their spiritual life. To do anything in order to live is to seek to live by works, and so to fall from grace.

18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Some critics render the passage "hold down the truth"; but it is probable the reading in the text is the better one. The context shows the apostle had in mind those who make no use of the truth they

possess; who do not strive to obey the truth they have knowledge of. Of such, who know their Master's will and do it not, it is said they shall be beaten with many stripes.

19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God had shewed *it* unto them.

20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

It is clear that the apostle held with David, that atheism is a disease of the heart rather than of the head. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. The light of nature alone is sufficient to teach us the existence of an Infinite Creator.

21. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

23. And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

The failure to glorify God, when He is known, will surely bring darkness, in any age or under any dispensation. There is no folly nor absurdity too great for men to commit when once they have lost the light of God. Yet men always imagine themselves growing wise as they go away from God. They have no standard by which to measure them-

selves, their humility is lost, and their vanity puffs them up. The foolish and debasing idolatries into which mankind sank when they cast off the knowledge of God are almost incredible, and are a shame to human nature. But they did these things while they imagined they were becoming wise.

24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

To corrupt the truth is to change it into a lie. The existence of God, and our duty to worship Him is the truth; but when men substituted idols representing demons, for the true and living God, and worshipped them, they changed the truth of God into a lie. Corrupted truth is the worst form of falsehood. It is not only a lie, but it apes the truth, and is thus the more likely to deceive. I have seen it stated that a false religion is better than no religion. This is a mistake; it is worse; just as a counterfeit coin is worse than no money. It would be difficult to deceive a pauper into the opinion that he is rich, if he has no money; but it may be done with counterfeit money. Skepticism, agnosticism, is less harmful than a false religion.

26. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change their natural use into that which is against nature:

27. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

The vile and debasing lusts of the pagan nations were so abominable as to almost surpass belief. St. Paul declares in another place that it is a shame to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. The state of affairs described as existing in Sodom gives us an idea of the condition of things in pagandom. No wonder that city was destroyed. Men often wonder at, and skeptics cavil at, the severity of God toward the Canaanites. This gives the clew. They were so debased that they had become incorrigible and God gave them up to destruction as he did Sodom, but by other means. By giving these nations up to the sword of the Israelites, God not only executed vengeance upon these sinners, but he impressed upon the Israelites themselves the enormity of their offence. The leisure classes in Rome at the time the apostle wrote this epistle, were nearly or quite as vile as the Sodomites. Chastity and common decency were almost strangers among them. The common people were not quite so much debased.

28. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

This reprobate mind was the result of the darkened heart spoken of in verse 21. A rejection of the truth darkens the moral nature. "If thine eye be evil thy whole body shall be full of darkness" says the Lord. The withdrawal of the light of God, the influence of the Holy Spirit, soon affects the intellect. The mental processes become erratic and foolish. There is no predicting what absurdities they will be guilty of. A madness is upon them. This was observed even by the pagans, who had a saying that "Whom the gods will destroy they first make mad." This fate is predicted of the false professors in the end of this age. Because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved, therefore God will send them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie. There are many reasons for believing that this prophecy is now being fulfilled.

The *things which are not convenient* are those unnatural desires and appetites which they cultivated, and gratified; those things which are against nature. They were strained, farfetched, out of the order of nature; therefore *not convenient*. In the 27th verse he tells us that they received in themselves the recompence that was meet. The results of such debauch-

ery were physical and mental degeneracy and weakness.

29. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30. Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31. Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

This description of the moral state of heathendom is so vivid and clear that it needs little comment. In the case of the Romans, their implacability and unmercifulness were shown in their love of gladiatorial combats. It often happened that one of the contestants was vanquished without being killed outright, and the sparing of his life depended upon the decision of the spectators. The victor waited for the signal of the emperor, or of the person presiding at the games. The spectators signified their wish and the emperor's thumb was turned up or down accordingly. If up, the vanquished man's life was spared; otherwise he was dispatched without mercy. It is to the shame of the Roman people that often the prostrate man was killed in cold blood at their demand.

To persist in doing those things known to be worthy of death, shows inveterate rebellion and

hardness of heart. But men often do what they are ashamed to have known. To *take pleasure in those who do* these shameful things shows a still lower stage of degradation and moral degeneracy. Such men have become lost to shame, and free from remorse.

The condition of the pagan world here described by St. Paul, and his description of false professors in the last days of the present age, as found in II Tim. 3rd chapter, 1st and 5th, are so similar as to excite astonishment. In order that the similarity may be clearly seen, I will give the two passages side by side that the comparison may be easy.

29. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,	2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
30. Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,	3. Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
31. Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.	4. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

Two thirds or three fourths of these characteristics are common to the heathen of Paul's day and the professed Christians of our day.

CHAPTER II.

1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

This apostrophe is addressed to no special person or class, and is no doubt of universal application; but it is probable that the apostle has the Jews in mind in what he says here.

On this point of judging there is general misapprehension. It is commonly thought that all judging is condemned. St. Paul's teaching is in harmony with the teaching of Christ in his sermon on the mount. The person who judges is here condemned for denouncing in another that of which he himself is guilty. The fact that a man does an unlawful thing is not positive proof of guilt. He may do it in ignorance of the law; this would plead an excuse. But when he condemns the same conduct in another, it is positive proof of guilt, and leaves him without excuse for his wrongdoing. He knows better. This is what Jesus means when he says, "Judge not lest ye be judged." We must be willing to be judged by the same rule by which we judge others. To con-

demn others for those things of which we ourselves are guilty, is sheer hypocrisy. If we do not wish to be judged, we must not judge others: "Those who live in glass houses must not throw stones." But those who are willing to be judged themselves are at liberty to judge others by the same rule. Having the beam out of his own eye one can consistently pull motes out of others' eyes. Only the innocent are competent to judge the guilty. This is shown in the case of the woman taken in adultery, as recorded in John's gospel. If this principle were enforced in our civil and criminal courts it would be much more difficult than it is now to secure competent juries.

2. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

3. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

How strange it is that any one should imagine that his own sins would be condoned if he should condemn the same sins in others. This is an evidence of the deceitfulness of sin. But in many cases men condemn the sins of others to conceal their own. This sort of hypocrisy is quite common. None are so unmerciful to other culprits as the guilty who think their guilt undiscovered. The others are guilty of the unpardonable crime of being found out. Such shall not escape the judgment of God. "They shall

have judgment without mercy, who showed no mercy." As they judged others so shall they be judged.

4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

God's forbearance with sinners who despise his grace and trample upon his goodness is astonishing. Infinite patience is incomprehensible to finite minds. Nor is that patience ever exhausted. It is no longer exercised simply because it is useless, the sinner's case being hopeless. So long as there is any possibility of repentance God's grace is extended to the ingrate.

Not only is it true that the goodness of God is intended to lead the sinner to repentance, but it is also true that nothing else can produce that effect. Fear can never lead to repentance. It is a slavish sentiment, appealing to self-love, and if excessive it paralyzes effort and dazes the intellectual faculties. There is nothing generous in it. If the sinner is ever separated from his sins he must be drawn from them; he cannot be driven from them. The prospect of punishment may make men fear to sin, but cannot deliver them from the love of sin. A sense of God's love and goodness is the only thing that can create an abhorrence of sin. This appeals to our gratitude

and to every generous sentiment of our nature. A sense of God's love will create in us a desire to love Him, and consequently make sin hateful to us.

5. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Wrath, when predicated of God, is a very different thing from the evil passion of that name found in demons and wicked men. The latter springs from hatred, the former from love. It is the wrath of love, and there is in it nothing incompatible with infinite pity. Punitive justice is inseparable from any form of government. As Governor of the moral universe God must punish incorrigible offenders. The nature of this punishment we do not understand. We are informed that wicked men suffer punishment with demons, but are nowhere taught that this punishment is inflicted by demons. The popular notion that sinners are put under the power of demons to be punished is unfounded. Wicked men fall into the hands of "the living God" when the day of grace is past; then the day of wrath will begin.

6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Rewards and punishments are to be measured out to men according to their deeds. Men are saved or lost accordingly as they believe the gospel or do not

believe it. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." "He that believeth not shall not see life." That is, men are saved according to their faith, but rewarded according to their works. This is a distinction that is often lost sight of. All believers are alike saved and all unbelievers are alike lost; but all believers have not the same rewards, nor all unbelievers the same punishments. Nor does it necessarily follow, because men are lost forever, that they are punished forever for the sins committed in this life. Nor can we with certainty assume that while degrees of punishment differ, the duration of punishment incurred for the sins of this life is the same in all cases. To be eternally lost is one thing; to be eternally punished is quite another thing. Men are lost because of what they are; they are punished for what they have done.

7. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Patient continuance in well doing is essential to success in the service of God. Modern Arminianism, while holding in accordance with scripture the doctrine of the possibility of falling from the grace of God so as to be finally lost, is guilty of minimizing the danger of apostasy. It has come to be considered a light matter to fall from grace. It is considered not only a *possibility*, but a *probability*. The children are taught to sing,

"If I forget Him and wander away,
Kindly He follows wherever I stray."

God says, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." He that looks back, after having put his hand to the gospel plow, is not fit for the kingdom of God. To forget God is a most heinous offence, and worthy of death; as says the Psalmist, "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God." God was once married to the backslider, but that is not the case now. Wilful sin is fatal to the soul, and its effects are irreparable. Inconstancy in God's service is inexcusable, and will fail of success.

We are here taught that immortality is to be sought after, and the logical inference is that it is therefore not naturally ours. The term is intended to apply to the body, or to the whole man, and does not apply to the spirit, or immaterial principle. So far as I know, immortality is never predicted of the soul or spirit, in the scriptures. But its existence apart from the body is plainly taught, and its indestructibility is asserted by the Lord Jesus. The immortality of the soul or spirit, though not stated explicitly, is intimated in many ways. It is logically inferred that as the body came from the earth, and so partakes of the nature of its source, being changeable and mortal, the spirit coming from God, partakes of His nature,

and so is unchangeable and immortal. So, "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." It may be asked "will not the wicked have immortal bodies in the resurrection?" It seems not. This gift is for those who seek it, and for them alone. The wicked will have the same life restored to them through Christ that they lost through the sin of Adam, with no access to a tree of life. It is said of God, "Who only hath immortality." In the absolute sense God alone is immortal. The immortality of His creatures depends upon His will. If He can create, He can destroy them. If it be true, as some philosophers teach, that something was never created from nothing, and so cannot be reduced to nothing, but that the whole universe, spiritual and material, is an emanation from God; then God can destroy the whole of it, or any part of it, by absorbing that which emanated from Him.

The *eternal life* which God gives to those who *seek for glory and honor and immortality*, is not eternal existence but eternal union with Himself. This is enjoyed in a limited sense in this life by the believer, but will be enjoyed hereafter in a more eminent sense.

8. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10. But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11. For there is no respect of persons with God.

This statement of the apostle that *there is no respect of persons with God*, is one of vast importance to the human race. It should finally dispose of the notion that God chose some to eternal life and left others to perish, without any foresight of faith or good works. Such difference made without any respect to character would certainly be respect of persons; for it would respect nothing else. Men often imagine that because they know more than others, and claim or profess more than others, that therefore God will deal more leniently with them than with others. The Jew imagined that he possessed this superiority over the Gentile. The professed Christian also often supposes that he has this advantage over the non-professor; that though he may live as other men live, and sin as other men do, that God will save him while condemning the others. This is a vain hope. If there be any advantage it is not in favor of the ungodly professor of Christianity. His responsibilities are greater and his guilt is correspondingly greater. It is a difficult matter to convince men that God is strictly impartial, and that He respects character alone.

12. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

13. (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

In the foregoing statements St. Paul is not attempting to show how either Jew or Gentile can be saved, but how they shall be judged, or what is the standard of judgment in the case of each. He does not say that any one shall be saved by keeping the law, but that each shall be judged by the standard he possesses. If those who have sinned without law shall perish without law, then all shall perish; for "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." They must be saved upon some other basis, if saved at all. By the law here spoken of is meant the decalogue. The Gentiles did many things contained in that law as fully as did the Jews, though they were ignorant of the existence of that law. Their keeping the law is true particularly of the duties which they owed to their neighbors. In some way they recognized those things to be wrong which the law forbids. What is the origin of this moral

sense which all men possess to a greater or less degree is a mooted question. The apostle says they *did by nature* the things contained in the law. I am persuaded that this natural sense of right and wrong, called conscience, is the result of light from God, through the agency of the Holy spirit, which comes to all men through Jesus Christ, who is a light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, as declared by St. John. This light measures their responsibility where there is no other revelation.

16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

This verse should be read in connection with the 12th, the other three verses having been thrown in by way of explanation. The idea of a general judgment, a day in which all secret things shall be made manifest, is found only in the scriptures. The belief in a future state of rewards and punishments was common among the heathen; but they had no notion of a special day of judgment. The common opinion among nominal Christians, that the saved and the unsaved are to be judged at that time, is also erroneous. That the righteousness of saints, and the fact of their innocence and acceptance with God, may be made manifest on that day, may be true enough; but their cases will have been passed on and their rewards received, long before that tremendous day. It is the

things that have been kept covered, *the secrets of men*, that shall be judged on that day. God is glorified in having sin exposed; and if we will not uncover and confess our sin ourselves, God will uncover it. He has declared "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." We have the choice of uncovering our sins now, or of having them uncovered then. If we uncover them, God will cover them. "Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered." When once God has covered them, they shall never again be uncovered. They shall be forgotten forever. "If we judge ourselves we shall not be judged and condemned with the wicked world." Judgment is going on now; it is begun at the house of God. Let us be sure that if we keep any sin concealed, God will expose it, and we shall be judged and condemned with the wicked world. This day of judgment referred to here by the apostle, will come after Christ's Millennial reign, and after the resurrection of the wicked dead. The commonly received notions upon the general judgment are crude and often unscriptural.

17. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

The name "Jew" meant originally a member of the tribe of Judah; but it afterward came to be applied to the whole Hebrew nation. It was not used until

about the time of the dispersion of the ten tribes, after which event the tribe of Judah constituted the larger part of the Israelites left. The name properly belonged to one who was in covenant relation with God. They rested in the law, considering themselves the special favorites of Heaven, because they possessed the law; and they made their boast of God, of their relation to Him as His chosen people.

18. And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

Because they knew God's will and approved of it, they imagined themselves much superior to those who were ignorant, not realizing that a knowledge of the right and an approval of it in theory, only added to their condemnation if they failed to do God's will. This address to the Jew, made here by the apostle, might with great pertinency be applied to modern professors of Christianity. How often they plume themselves upon their knowledge of divine things, and their acceptance of good doctrines, while they live in disobedience and open disregard of God's demands upon them.

19. And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

20. An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

Persons who, like these Jews, have a form of knowledge of the truth, without any real experience,

are generally confident of their ability to instruct others. They have a knowledge that puffeth up and fills them with self-confidence. They are ready to run without being sent. When men become truly qualified for the work of teaching others, they have become so sensible of their own weakness, and of the responsibility of the work, that they hesitate, and cry out in dismay, "Who is sufficient for such things?" A forwardness to teach, and a readiness to assume the responsibilities of a spiritual guide, are not favorable signs of a fitness for the work.

21. Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22. Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23. Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?

It is a matter of great astonishment that any one should suppose that a knowledge of the right, and a teaching of righteousness would palliate or excuse wrongdoing. One might suppose that the apostle had overdrawn the case, did not observation prove the contrary. It is a matter of common observation that men suppose themselves in God's favor, and on the road to heaven, because they profess righteousness and teach righteousness, while they themselves are daily transgressors of God's law. There is no more

common error than this, however absurd it may seem. Why any man should imagine that God will not punish him for trangressions that he himself declares God will punish other men for, is one of the strange idiosyncrasies of human nature. Was it any worse for a Gentile to steal than for a Jew to do so? And is it any more sinful for a common sinner to lie than for a professed Christian to do so? And will God excuse the one and punish the other? There is no respect of persons with God.

24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Their violations of their laws and the inconsistency between their lives and their teachings caused the name of God to be spoken against. The same is true of false professors of Christianity, "by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of." There is no influence so potent in producing skepticism and unbelief in Christ's teachings as the ungodly lives of professed Christians. The most convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity is wanting among unfaithful disciples. The efforts of infidel teachers will have little effect where God's professed people are obedient and faithful.

25. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

Circumcision in the flesh was the sign and seal of the covenant which God made with the natural seed of Abraham. This covenant concerned only earthly things. Its highest rewards were long life, riches, health, and dominion over enemies; its severest punishment, physical death. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses." If the Jew broke the law, he made the covenant null, so that his circumcision could not profit him; it became meaningless; and hence equal to uncircumcision.

26. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

This is nothing more than justice, but was quite unpalatable to the Jews, who looked upon themselves as being specially favored of God, and His exclusive beneficiaries; while he regarded the uncircumcised Gentile with contempt, as an outcast from mercy, a dog, beneath the notice of Jehovah. This doctrine of the equality of Jew and Gentile must have been particularly obnoxious to them.

27. And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision transgress the law?

To judge, here signifies to condemn. And surely if the Gentile without revelation did that which was

lawful, while the Jew, who enjoyed the light of revelation violated the law, the former would condemn the latter. And yet it is generally supposed that professed Christians who transgress God's commandments are in some way far superior to non-professors who keep those commandments. The former are supposed to be heirs of Heaven, while the latter are heirs of perdition.

In all that the apostle has said concerning the keeping of the law, by either Jew or Gentile, we are to understand that neither secured eternal life by so doing. This is impossible, as the apostle shows in another place. The intent of his argument is to show the self-sufficient Jew that in his need of salvation he was on an exact equality with the Gentile. The great mass of the Jewish people stumbled at this stumbling-stone.

28. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29. But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

The apostle here states a very important fact, or principle. The Jew here is made to mean one of God's people. The Jew who was one outwardly, was a Jew in the fullest sense, so far as the old covenant was concerned. There was then no other kind of Jew. But the old covenant church was not the real

church of God, and so the Jew outwardly was not one of God's real people. The circumcision which was outward in the flesh was the only circumcision then in existence. The circumcision of the heart was then unknown. "For the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart," declares the prophet. To this universal rule there was no exception. The Jewish church was a type of the true church, and the Jew was a type of the real child of God. Circumcision of the heart is the real circumcision; and this work is the taking away of inward sin, "the sins of the flesh," and the establishment of inward purity. Only such as have experienced this spiritual purification are the children of God.

General Observations.

God's dealings with the Jewish people and their relation to Him, and to the Gentile nations, are matters of peculiar interest. Upon these subjects much might be said for which there is not space here. Shortly after the deluge, the nations began to relapse into idolatry; and this apostasy became so general that the knowledge of the true God was likely to be lost entirely. To prevent this calamity, and to keep alive a hope of the promised Messiah, as well as to preserve the revelation received from God, one nation

was chosen as a repository of these precious truths. In order that these ends might be accomplished, this nation must be separated from the others, and must be dealt with in a peculiar manner. They must be made to feel that they were the special favorites of Heaven, and that they possessed exceptional holiness which would make it pollution to associate familiarly with others not thus favored. They must be filled with the spirit of exclusiveness, or the result would be inevitable failure of the plan. This, no doubt, tended to develop spiritual pride and superciliousness, and did not make the Jewish character a lovable one; but in spite of the contempt of the Jews for other nations, whom they regarded as dogs, it was with great difficulty they were kept from imitating their idolatries. This tutelage of the Israelites was not for their own benefit alone, but for the benefit of the race. They were not chosen because they were any better than other peoples, as Moses assures them, but it is probable God saw in their national traits, something peculiarly adapted to His purpose. A large part of the nation became incorrigibly idolatrous and were carried away by the King of Assyria, scattered among the nations and lost. But the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the priests and Levites, were kept comparatively free from idolatry, especially after the Babylonish captivity, and were as far as

possible prepared for the manifestation of the Son of God among them.

We are not to suppose that the God of infinite impartiality had any special love for Jews over Gentiles. In His dealings with them He had the good of the human race in purpose. Nor can it be said that discipline especially fitted the Jews for the reception of the gospel, of which they had the first offer. Rather the contrary appears to be true. It was difficult for the Jew to acknowledge the equality of the Gentile in church privileges; and then he had so long been taught to acquire merit by obedience to law, that the doctrine of salvation by grace was a stumbling-block to him. A remnant was saved; but the great mass of the Jewish people refused to come in to the gospel feast where Gentiles were equally welcome.

CHAPTER III.

1. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision?

2. Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

An oracle is a Divine revelation. In Acts VII–38, Moses is said to have received and transmitted "the lively oracles." This refers to the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, or the book of the law, as it is elsewhere called. St. Stephen here recognizes the Pentateuch as being Divinely inspired. Jesus joins the law and the prophets together, thus recognizing the inspiration of both. The other sacred writings of the Old Testament were not so highly venerated by the Jews, though they are included by them among the oracles of God. But the sacred book was not the only oracle among the Israelites. Each prophet was a living oracle by whom God spake in times past unto his people. Then the priest wearing the ephod was also an oracle who might be consulted concerning the will of God. In this case God was said to answer by Urim and Thummim. This possession of a Divine Revelation, and the possession

of living oracles by whom the will of God might be learned in any emergency, was a great advantage to the Jew, most certainly. The Gentiles also had oracles, but they were lying oracles, presided over by demons, who could not foretell events in the future. The importance of ascertaining the will of God was keenly felt by the pagans. Hence the existence of soothsayers and augurs who pretended to understand portents, and to be able to foretell the future by means of the flight of birds, or by the examination of the entrails of victims slain in sacrifice. As for Christians, they have the Holy Spirit to teach them the will of God, and if willing to do His will they shall know His will.

3. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

4. God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

The unbelief and unfaithfulness of many of those to whom the promise was made, that is, a large part of the Jewish nation, could not affect the faithfulness of God nor the truth of His promises. To the Jews it seemed that God could not reject them without repudiating His promises. I shall have more to say on this point farther on.

The apostle does not use the phrase "God forbid." The name of the Deity is not used. The phrase used

means "not at all" or "by no means." St. Paul did not fail to reverence God's name, if the translators did so fail.

It is a common practice among men to set themselves up as God's critics and judges, informing us what part of God's word is credible and what is not. This might seem presumptuous at first glance, but its commonness has reconciled most people to the practice. This is true both of theologians and of scientists. The "higher criticism" of the theological critics is so exalted, that those critics can look down upon the Almighty only with tolerance and ill-concealed contempt. The scientists can account for the origin of life and for other existing conditions without any need of an Infinite Creator; and God is excluded, in their systems, from His own universe. Nevertheless, I am convinced that, in the end, God will be found true, and many self-sufficient wise men will be found liars. There is yet in the world much that the inspired writer calls "pseudo-science," consisting of a small modicum of fact and a large per cent of conjecture. No well authenticated scientific fact contradicts any revealed truth.

5. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)

6. God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

7. For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

The fifth and seventh verses seem to contain an objection urged by a Jew. The point of the objection seems to be this: "If my disobedience tends to magnify God's faithfulness in keeping His part of the covenant, why should I be punished for doing that which brings glory to God?" The sixth verse contains the apostle's answer: "how on this principle could God judge the world?" There would be no distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness, if both were rewardable. By speaking as a man, the apostle probably means that he is speaking the sentiments of another, and not his own.

8. And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

This charge which the apostle sets forth here at some length, was brought against the Christians by their enemies, probably their Jewish opposers. The charge was presumably founded upon the doctrine of grace, a charge which others since have made, that grace encourages sin, since punishment may be avoided by repentance. This charge was made maliciously, as the objector knew it to be false, so that his condemnation is just. If the sorrow of this world brought pardon this charge might have some ground

to stand upon. But as nothing short of godly sorrow will prepare us for the exercise of God's mercy, there is nothing which so discourages the repetition of the offence. Much of that which passes for repentance and pardon, gives men a false conception of sin, making it appear as a light thing to sin against God, and thus encourages transgressors to presume upon Divine mercy. But the gospel is not responsible for this perversion of its doctrines. The idea that it is proper to do evil that good might come is common. It is a doctrine generally received. It is taught in our Universities by professors of Ethics. Yet it is just as damnable a doctrine now as when the first Christians were accused of teaching it.

9. What then? Are we better *than they?* No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

In respect of their need of salvation, there was no difference between Jew and Gentile. All that had been done for the Jews could have no further effect than to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. In this respect, it was a failure so far as the great majority were concerned. It was a very humiliating lesson for the Jew to learn, that in spite of his great advantage and his high pretensions, he must secure salvation on exactly the same terms with those whom he had been taught to despise as outcasts. Notwith-

standing all that had been done for the race, up to the time of Christ's advent, the result was to leave all men, without exception, under sin and condemnation.

10. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:
11. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
12. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
13. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:
14. Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:
15. Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:
16. Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:
17. And the way of peace have they not known:
18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

What a description of fallen humanity! But this is God's view of natural men. But it may be asked, are not some persons mentioned in the Old Testament said to be righteous? Yes, Abel and Lot are called righteous, and Noah is said to have become heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Abraham's faith was also imputed to him for righteousness. In this sense all pre-advent believers were righteous. But they were righteous only in the same sense infants are righteous, by imputation. They were not actually so. The righteousness of the law was not fulfilled in them. In heart, and generally in conduct, they were not righteous. Abraham, the

most perfect character of the Old Testament was a polygamist, a liar, and a man of war. Moses was a murderer, David an adulterer and murderer, Lot was guilty of drunkenness and incest. That righteousness or holiness which brings men into unity and fellowship with God, they were destitute of. Therefore it is truly said, there is none righteous, no, not one.

19. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Since this is true the Jew could not avoid the conclusion that he was meant, as he, rather than the Gentile, was under the law. It is a strange circumstance that the above scripture from the 10th to the 18th verse, including both, is often quoted to prove the sinfulness of believers. This shows two things: 1st, great ignorance of the scriptures; 2nd, the fallacy and impropriety of quoting a passage of scripture regardless of the context. Scripture may thus be made to teach falsehoods and absurdities. The effort of the apostle is to prove the need of all men, both Jews and Gentiles, of Christ and His Salvation. As what is here quoted by St. Paul applies to them who are under the law, and as believers under the gospel are said to be not under the law, but under grace, it cannot apply to them. It is of

men in their natural state it can be said, there is none good.

20. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Herein is laid down a fundamental principle of the doctrine of grace. To the Jew it seemed revolutionary. It uprooted and overturned at one fell blow, all his righteousness and all his hope. It left him without a refuge and shelterless, as it does every other sinner, exposed to the wrath of God.

> "Faded his virtuous show,
> His form without the power."

It annihilated his whole religious system, and filled him with both fear and wrath. It shoved him off his pedestal and confounded him with those whom he had been taught to despise as the enemies of God, the uncircumcised. Is it any wonder that he was stumbled?

The fact that *by the law is the knowledge of sin* is proof that it cannot at the same time be a means of justification; for how can the law at the same time prove a man a sinner and acquit or justify him? The two offices are manifestly incompatible; the same agent cannot both condemn and acquit at the same time.

21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22. Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

By *the justification* of God is meant God's manner, or plan, of justification. If man cannot be justified by obedience to law there must be some other plan of justification devised, if man is to be saved. He cannot be justified by the law because any law, obedience to which would glorify God, is beyond his ability to obey. Hence such a law by occasioning transgression, becomes the means of giving a knowledge of sin, both outward and inward. Justification by obedience to law is adapted to the condition of perfect beings, who are able to obey law in letter and in spirit. Sinners must be justified, if justified at all, on a different plan. This plan, which is called God's plan, is salvation by grace, through faith as the condition. These plans differ as far as perfect, sinless intelligences differ from lost sinners, and they cannot be mingled nor harmonized.

When men are without law, they cannot be said to sin in the same sense as they do who have a law; for "where there is no law there is no transgression." But such *have come short of the glory of God.* God is glorified by the love and consequent obedience of

His creatures. But all men are by nature destitute of love to God; hence they come short of His glory.

24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25. Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26. To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The first characteristic of God's plan of justification is its freeness; "*being justified freely by his grace*," is the apostle's way of expressing this truth. Since the sinner is unable to do anything to please God, his pardon must be a free gift. But upon what principle can God pardon the offender? How can He exercise mercy without sacrificing justice? How can law and order be upheld if the innocent and the guilty are treated in the same way? St. Paul sees in God's scheme redemption and propitiation. The doctrine of a vicarious atonement through the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to this scheme of saving sinners. To deny this, is to vitiate the whole plan. It is not only necessary that we should have his life as our example, we must also have his death as a propitiation for us. It is *through faith in his blood* that we are to receive *remission of sins that are past*. In his vicarious sacrifice the law has been vindicated, justice has been satisfied so far that God can *be just*

and yet the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. The only condition on the sinner's part is *faith in his blood.* Doing nothing to merit pardon, he trusts alone in Jesus' death for the remission of sins. *Remission of sins* includes not only the idea of pardon, but also that of purification. The word "remit" signifies taking, or sending, away. The original Greek word has the same meaning. Christ is not only our sacrifice but also our scape-goat, who takes away our sins. He came to *make an end of sin*, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.

27. Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

That which we receive as a free gift, and which we have in no sense earned or merited, affords no ground for boasting. But if we in any sense earn or merit what we receive, we may have occasion to boast. We can take some of the credit to ourselves. But as God cannot possibly be brought under obligation to one who has nothing to pay, the sinner can never glory before God. Boasting can never be made impossible by a scheme in which obedience to law, that is, works, is made the condition of acceptance with God. Salvation, by grace, alone can exclude boasting.

28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

This is, perhaps, the first dogmatic statement in the scriptures of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, without works. It is clear and unmistakable; a doctrine long obscured by the Romish church but clearly enunciated by the early Protestant reformers; a doctrine declared by them to be wholesome and very full of comfort. As the Jews trusted in obedience to law for justification it was necessary to overthrow that system, that God's plan might take its place. So the apostle Paul argues the question at length in this epistle.

29. *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30. Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

The Jews fell into the error of supposing that Jehovah was peculiarly their God, instead of being the God of the whole earth. The apostle has to remind them that He is the God of the Gentiles also. It is sometimes supposed that there is some hidden significance in the use of two different prepositions before the word "faith," by faith, and through faith. I see nothing in this but an avoidance of repetition; the two prepositions mean the same thing, the means or instrument. The objection that faith would *make void the law* is denied by the apostle, who asserts,

on the contrary, that faith establishes the law. The law is established in that every jot and tittle of it is fulfilled either by the believer or his substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. As to the believer, the essence or righteousness of it is fulfilled in him. In the letter, it is fulfilled by our Representative and Vicar, the Lord Jesus. Thus, what at first sight seems to abolish the law, really firmly establishes it.

CHAPTER IV.

1. What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

Martin Luther understood St. James to contradict St. Paul, when he declares that Abraham was justified by works. (James II–21st.) But this is a mistake, as he was not speaking of the same thing. James was speaking of works of obedience after justification, which justified or proved the genuineness of his faith. So by works was his faith made perfect. No faith is genuine which is not accompanied, or followed by, obedience to God's commandments.

3. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Abraham's faith *was counted unto him for righteousness*, or justification. His faith was accepted in the place of righteousness or obedience. He could not keep God's holy law, but he could believe God's promise; so what he could do, was accepted in place of that which he could not do. Not that the two were

equivalent. There can really be no merit in believing God. It is the only rational thing to do. As obedience is due and faith pays no part of the debt, there must be some amends made somewhere, so that God may justly pardon the sinner. Herein we see the necessity for a vicarious atonement. We may say that God has the power to pardon sin unconditionally. But can it be done justly? And can moral order be maintained in this way? I think not. A difference must be made between the innocent and the guilty; between the obedient and the disobedient. If both are treated alike, sin is encouraged and obedience is discouraged. The law must be kept by some one, either by the subject of it, or by one who voluntarily assumes an obligation not required of the substitute. Christ, as a mere man, owed obedience for himself. He could not then have obeyed for others. As a divine being, not subject to law, he could obey for us, as well as suffer for us. This was necessary that God might justly pardon sin. We are not to suppose that Christ suffered to appease the wrath of God, except in the sense of offended justice. Justice must be done, and mercy must not prevent it. The two must be made to harmonize. This could be done on no other conceivable basis except that of vicarious atonement. On this basis, faith could be counted for righteousness.

4. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

This fact is self-evident. If the sinner can perform any work of obedience, he would bring God in debt to him. The worker would be simply receiving what he had earned. If the subject of law can render a perfect obedience to law, he will merit justification. But there must be no lack anywhere or he falls short of justification into condemnation. If he offends in one point he is guilty of the whole. But this scheme of justification is a rejection of Christ and of His grace, since He is not needed. The man who can thus obey, can stand alone and needs no Redeemer or Advocate, provided there are no past sins to account for.

5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

The man who feels himself unable perfectly to keep God's law, seeing no hope of justification in that way, is ready for some other plan. As he cannot keep the whole law it is useless to labor to keep any of it, as it avails him nothing; so he ceases working; *he worketh not.* He must be saved by grace or not at all. But the condition of salvation by grace is not working, but believing. If I am to be justified by works, I need no grace and consequently no

faith. If I am to be justified by grace, I need no merit, consequently I need no works. My works would only be a denial of the grace of God, and consequently a hindrance to my justification by grace through faith. These two plans of justification cannot be commingled as they mutually exclude each other.

6. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7. *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

In this place the apostle first speaks of *imputed righteousness;* though the same thing is meant by counting faith for righteousness. There has been much controversy over this doctrine, and I will speak of it more fully in another place.

9. *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

St. Paul here shows that the doctrine of justification by faith, which the Jews so opposed, and at which they stumbled, was older than circumcision

and the law of Moses; that their father Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, so that this rite could have had nothing to do in procuring his justification. If uncircumcised Abraham could be justified, why not any other uncircumcised man? Moreover, so far was circumcision from being the cause of justification, it was the result of it; since it was because of Abraham's faith that he was chosen to be the progenitor of God's ancient People; and thus his circumcision was rather the *seal* of God's approval of his faith while uncircumcised. Hence no ground was left to the Jews for the exclusive appropriation of God's promises.

12. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised.

The apostle will not even allow that all the Jews are the children of Abraham in so high a sense as the believing Gentiles. Only those Jews who follow in the steps of Abraham's faith are in this sense Abraham's children. Other Jews are Abraham's children in a lower sense, a natural sense. To such no promises were made except concerning the land of Canaan and their occupancy of the land. By disobedience they made void these promises and had nothing left.

13. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14. For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

The promise made to Abraham that he should be heir of the world was to be fulfilled to his seed, and we are told in another place that this seed was Christ. To *make faith void*, is to make it empty or useless. If men were to inherit the things promised by works of obedience, then there was no use nor necessity for faith, and thus it would be made void, and the promise made of no effect.

15. Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.

Among unholy beings a holy law *worketh wrath*, because of their inability to obey it. Among holy and perfect intelligences the law has no such effect. They live by obedience, and merit favor instead of wrath. If unholy beings were given no law it is plain there would be no transgression. However the absence of law would not save them from ruin and suffering, the result of their unholiness, though it would prevent their being guilty of actual transgression.

16. Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Justification is of faith that it might be by grace, and it is of grace through faith because it is not possible on any other basis in the case of lost sinners. If there had been a law given that could have given life, verily salvation would have been by the law. Salvation by grace is an exception, a solecism, in God's moral universe.

17. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

God promised Abraham to make him the father of many nations, not of the Jewish nation only; and though naturally he was the father of several nations or tribes, having had other sons than Isaac, yet he seems to have counted Isaac the only legitimate son, and so made him his only heir; and thus Isaac and his descendants through Jacob, Esau having been discarded also, became heirs of the promises made to Abraham's natural seed. But the many nations included the Gentile nations along with the Jews; and Abraham is declared to be, before God, the father of us all; all who are partakers of a like precious faith. God is said to speak of things as actually existing, which exist in His foreknowledge and purpose.

18. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

Quite a trial was made of Abraham's faith in this promise of a son. Naturally speaking, the thing promised was impossible, and hence Abraham's faith in God was put to severe test. But Abraham, being assured that it was God who made the promise, believed it with all his heart. The apparent impossibility was double, as it existed in both him and his wife. It is not strange that this was so with Sarah, who was ninety years old; but it is somewhat surprising in the case of Abraham, who lived to the age of one hundred and seventy-five years, that he should have been impotent at a hundred years old. It is said of Moses at one hundred and twenty years of age, that his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. There is an apparent contradiction to this statement concerning Abraham in the history in Genesis. In the XXVth Chapter, 1st and 2nd verses we read: "Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah." This is given after the account of Sarah's death, and would appear to have taken place after that event. But this is probably not the case; because, first, it would contradict the statement concerning Abraham's impotency. We might obviate that difficulty by supposing that the miraculous restoration of vigor to Abraham was permanent. But there is still another

objection. Keturah would have been a lawful wife after Sarah's death. But she is called a concubine. In the fifth and sixth verses we read: "And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country." As we know of but one other concubine, Hagar, Keturah must be reckoned a concubine also; and besides her children are not recognized by Abraham as being legitimate. It is probable then that he took her during Sarah's lifetime.

20. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21. And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Abraham's faith was what would now be accounted the faith of ignorance. He did not know as do the scientists and wise men of to-day that the Almighty God is so fettered and hampered by natural laws that a miracle is an impossibility and not to be credited either as a matter of history or of promise. The apparent impossibility of the thing promised did not stagger him, as he believed that what God promised he was able to perform. Happy ignorance! that produced such beneficent results. Surely this is an illustration of the adage that, "Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise."

22. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Abraham's justification through belief of God's promise, is an example for succeeding ages. We are given to understand that we are to be justified in exactly the same manner, on precisely the same terms. Abraham performed no act of service, no work of obedience in order to justification, but simply believed God's promise. So must we do. Those who teach that there must be some act of obedience precedent to justification, contradict the teaching of God's word, and destroy the analogy and force of the example given. *To him that worketh not, but believeth*, his faith is counted for righteousness. To work is to make faith void. But it may be asked, is not repentance necessary? It is; but not as a condition of justification, but as a condition of faith. If a sinner could believe in the Lord Jesus Christ without repentance, he could be saved without repentance. But this he cannot do. An impenitent sinner cannot trust God to save him. Abraham had already done that which is a type of repentance. He had forsaken the land of his nativity at God's

call. Had he refused to do this, he never would have believed God's promise.

We must believe a miracle too, as we must believe in one *raised from the dead, raised for our justification.* Faith in an unresurrected Christ will do us no good; it will not justify us. He was also *delivered for our offences.* The faith that justifies is a sure belief in, and reliance upon, a vicarious sufferer, and a triumphant conqueror over death, hell, and the grave. A faith that "laughs at impossibilities" and finds God's promises "yea and amen, in Christ Jesus."

General Observations.

The doctrine of Imputed Righteousness was formerly a much mooted question, but is seldom mentioned by way of controversy at present, nor is it often referred to at all. I shall not enter into the subject at any length here, but a cursory view of the doctrine seems appropriate. Imputed righteousness is the counterpart of imputed sin. If the sins of men were imputed to Christ, then, in the same sense, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to men. As Christ who is sinless was treated as though he were a sinner, so men who are sinful are treated as though they were righteous. This is true, in the first instance, of the

human race in general. Christ is declared to be the Savior of all men, especially of them that believe. He is not merely the possible Savior of all men, as sometimes explained, but the actual Savior of all men. John the Baptist said of him, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Adam's sin was the sin of the whole world, being imputed to all men, his posterity. And this sin would have produced eternal alienation from God, and consequently eternal misery had it not been taken away. But Christ took it away, so that though men suffer the temporary consequences of Adam's sin they shall never suffer its eternal consequences. As Adam's sin was imputed, bringing condemnation, so Christ's righteousness is imputed, bringing justification. The remedy is as wide as the disease. No person shall ever suffer eternally for any sinfulness or unholiness which was the direct consequence of Adam's sin, unless he has in the exercise of free choice made that sin his own. This insures the salvation of dying infants, idiots, and all irresponsible persons, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

In the second place, all believers before Christ's advent, and up to the setting up of the spiritual kingdom at Pentecost, had nothing but imputed righteousness. Christ had not yet come to make an end of sin and to bring in everlasting righteousness. The

law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had not yet made men free from the law of sin and death. Consequently those old covenant believers were not in any sense actually righteous. They had no holiness of heart. This experience is promised under the New Covenant alone. Hence as these believers had no inward holiness, and could not have perfect obedience to a holy law, their righteousness was wholly imputed.

In the third place, believers under the New Covenant must also have imputed righteousness; but not in the same sense as the other classes spoken of. In the case of ancient believers, Christ's righteousness covered their unholiness, because the opportunity to be made holy was not present with them. They were not responsible for being born unholy, and no provision having yet been made for taking that unholiness away, they were not responsible for its continuance. So Christ's righteousness covered all their need. But the case is different with New Testament believers. Provision is now made to renew and sanctify men. They need not retain their evil hearts of unbelief. They may be washed and sanctified and made pure and clean. Inwardly they may be made righteous, and to refuse or neglect to do so is to become responsible for their unholiness, which Christ's righteousness could no longer cover, else He

would become the minister of sin. The Christian, so far as his heart, or moral nature, is concerned, is actually made righteous or holy, so that in this respect he needs no imputed righteousness. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in him," a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. This holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is not his own in the sense of being wrought by him, but it is actually wrought in him by Divine agency. But in the matter of perfect obedience to the holy law he is still at fault, in that through his physical, and consequently his mental, imperfection, he cannot obey in act without mistake or infirmity. This imperfect service is overlooked through the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

His perfect obedience is accepted in lieu of our imperfect one. In this sense alone is righteousness imputed to the Christian believer.

In the case of the sinner coming to Christ for pardon, he is accepted just as Abraham was, and upon the same terms, as I have heretofore stated. Faith is imputed to him for righteousness.

The instance of Abraham's justification is chosen as an illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith, not because it differs from many others, but because first, it is explicitly stated in Genesis that his faith was counted to him for righteousness; and in the

second place, because the promises were made to him, and the covenant was established with him. His case is used as an *argumentum ad hominem* to the Jews who trusted in their descent from Abraham for acceptance with God; and if the facts in his case could be turned against them, the foundation of their hope and confidence would be destroyed. This the apostle most effectually accomplished in the foregoing chapter.

CHAPTER V.

1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

We are now given the results of justification by faith. The first result is *peace with God.* Before, we were at enmity with Him and in rebellion against His government. We were unwilling that His will should be done, but wanted our own way. God, in Jesus Christ, was reconciled to the sinner, but the sinner is unreconciled to God. By repentance and faith the sinner becomes reconciled; he accepts God's will as his will, and God's ways as right ways. The variance is at an end. He is pleased with God and God is pleased with him. Enmity and hatred have given place to love and unity. The carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and which prevents its possessor from pleasing God, has given place to the mind of Christ. Being in Christ, old things have passed away, and, behold, all things have become new. Nothing of revolt, or resistance to God, or of protest, is left in the man who is justified by faith. So having become com-

pletely reconciled to the will of God, there is real peace between his soul and God; not smothered rebellion ever striving to break out into open conflict, but peace, quiet contentment, joyful acceptance of God's rule. To suppose, as some do, that a man whose nature is at enmity with God, and who is thus prevented from pleasing God, as the apostle declares in another place, to suppose, I say, that such an one is at peace with God, is the extreme of absurdity.

2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It is by Jesus Christ alone that *we have access into this grace* of justification, and that through faith in His atoning merits; and thus having access *we stand*. It is held by some, who would magnify one grace at the expense of another, that God's people cannot stand in a state of justification, and that the second verse of this chapter refers to another grace than the one mentioned in the first verse. This assumption is purely gratuitous. There is not an iota of evidence for it. The apostle has been writing in the two preceding chapters about one subject only; viz., justification by faith. In this chapter he draws his conclusion from his preceding arguments. The assumption that he changes his subject without any hint of so doing is foolish and inadmissible. *This grace*

wherein we stand is the grace about which he has been previously speaking. The notion that God provides any state of grace for His people in which they cannot stand, or which they cannot maintain, is wholly unsupported by scripture, and absurd in itself.

Those who are justified by faith also rejoice in hope of the glory of God. While in this life the Christian has his evil things, temptation, trial and reproach; but he looks forward to a glorious reward, a blissful immortality. Believing God's promises of future blessedness he rejoices with joy unspeakable.

3. And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
4. And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

It is not so much *because of* tribulation that we glory, as *in despite of it*. We glory in it because of its good results. Tribulation signifies flailing, the process by which anciently the chaff and grain were separated. Trials and sufferings produce a like result in a spiritual sense. Enduring these things we learn to be patient. If they excite rebellion, they produce the opposite effect. Men cannot learn patience in prosperity and through success. By failure, by hope deferred, we learn to be patient and to wait.

In patient submission to God's will we gain experience of God's faithfulness and goodness. Suffering

is necessary to us; but unless it is borne in patience and humble submission, it will not benefit us. Experience encourages hope. The more we learn of God the brighter will our hopes become, the stronger will be the hold which our anchor takes upon the things within the vail.

5. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Here is the foundation of all our joy and hope; *because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us.* This gift of the Holy Spirit is the seal of our adoption, the earnest of our inheritance. Without this we have no proof of sonship, no assurance that God's promises are ours. But with this gift we have a foretaste of the joys of heaven, and a divine assurance of heirship in the heavenly kingdom. Because God has given us of His Spirit therefore we are always confident, as the apostle declares in another place. An experience without the gift of the Holy Spirit, is in no sense a Christian experience.

By the gift of the Holy Spirit, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. The love of God is the new nature produced in us by the Holy Spirit. So we are said to be partakers of the divine nature, since God is love. We cannot love God until His

love is shed abroad in us by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Because of this love, *hope maketh not ashamed.* Believers have many temptations to be ashamed of Christ and of His words before a gainsaying generation; but the hope of heavenly bliss and of a glorious reward, buoys the soul above any sense of shame and makes it insensible to reproach and scorn.

6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Without strength, that is without power to do the will of God. That this is the case is the first lesson to be learned in the doctrine of grace. It is humiliating to human nature to confess itself helpless. But until this point is gained the Messiah's life and death will do us no good. The great difficulty with lost men is that they are *ungodly.* All outward sin and transgression spring from this unlikeness to God in our natures. Until this is remedied, no permanent relief is offered.

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.
8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

No one would be willing to die in place of a bad man; but some might be found willing to die for a good man. Jesus declared, Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend. This is considered to be the highest test of love in

man. But God's love toward us is commended by the fact that Christ died for sinners; his enemies who were in rebellion against His righteous government. In this respect it far surpasses all mere human affection.

9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

If God so loved us when we were enemies to Him, as to give His Son to die for us, how *much more* will He save us from wrath now since we have been *justified by His blood*, and have been brought into harmony with Him and with His laws. We have every reason to trust Him for present and eternal salvation.

10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

We were not actually reconciled to God by Christ's death, but the means of reconciliation was thus provided. The victim is slain and reconciliation will be complete when the sinner is willing to surrender. The atonement being made, and the means of reconciliation provided by Christ's death, *we shall be saved by his life*. It was not sufficient for the salvation of sinners that Christ should die. He must also live again. His resurrection and ascension to heaven were just as essential. "He is able to save unto the

uttermost all who come unto God by him, *seeing that he ever liveth* to make intercession for them." The whole gospel plan depended upon his living again. The Holy Spirit would not be given until he ascended to the Father. It was by his resurrection that he led captivity captive, and obtained gifts for men. If he did not live he could not save. In another sense we are saved by his life, in that we live his life, which is a life unto God. In still another sense we may be said to be saved by the life of Christ. The Christian can fulfill the righteousness of the law by loving God and his neighbor, but not the letter of the law, on account of ignorance and infirmity. But the whole law in every jot and tittle, must be fulfilled by some one. This our Lord, who as a divine personage was not subject to law, did for us; so that we are saved by his obedience as well as by his suffering on the cross. In this sense also we are saved by his life.

11. And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The word here rendered "atonement" is a derivative of the word in the 10th verse translated "reconciled." Atonement then means reconciliation. The word "atonement" is from the Latin, signifying literally to be at one, or at-one-ment.

12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

It is evident that St. Paul believes the account given in the book of Genesis, of the creation and fall of man. His whole succeeding argument is based upon the facts given in that history. It is becoming quite common in these days for persons claiming to be Christians and even Christian ministers, to discredit this account, and to treat it as a myth, or at best an allegory. They have become too wise to believe such incredible fables, and they prefer to derive their origin from the ape. Such a way of accounting for the origin of man is so much more credible, if not creditable, to them. But the account given of man's original holiness and perfection, and his subsequent fall into sin, furnishes the facts upon which the whole plan of redemption by Christ is based. Without these facts, the whole scheme is a chimera, a figment of the imagination, "Made of such stuff as dreams are, and as baseless as the fantastic visions of the morning."

The statement that *death entered the world by sin* is to be understood as referring to the human race. The lower animals were no doubt always subject to death. Their remains are found in the rocks, showing that they died long before the creation of man.

Man was made an exception to the rule, until by sin he forfeited his right to the antidote against decay which God had provided for him. Then the laws controlling the material universe asserted their sway and man began to die. Death became universal because all had sinned. Not actually but by imputation. When Adam fell, the race necessarily fell with him. He could not convey to them what he had lost, and all were counted as sinners. They were sinners in embryo, until they became sinners in fact.

13. (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Death reigned from Adam to Moses; that is, mankind died just the same as afterward. It is true, too, that *sin was in the world;* man did those things that are contrary to the will of God. But the apostle declares that as there was no law yet promulgated their sins were not imputed to them, for *sin is not imputed where there is no law.* As death is the result of sin, and it did not result from the personal sins of these persons without law, death must have resulted from the imputation of Adam's sin. This fact of the imputation of Adam's sin, is seen in the

death of infants and other irresponsible persons, who cannot themselves commit sin. If death be an evil, and an untimely death must be held as such, at the least, then a just God cannot inflict such an evil without adequate cause. If the cause is not in the victim, it must be somewhere else. Adam is declared to be a figure of him that was to come, that is Christ. He is the head of the human race, as Christ is the head of the spiritual race, the children of God. So Christ is called the second Adam.

15. But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16. And not *as it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

17. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

In these verses the apostle is showing that we gain much more in Christ than we lost in Adam; that the grace of God abounds far beyond the effect of Adam's sin; that we are not only saved through the free gift of grace from the sin of the world but from the consequences of our own sins; sins against light and knowledge which we have voluntarily committed; that through Christ we are not only restored to the condition of Adam in paradise; to that earthly

life which he enjoyed, but to a glorious immortality, to *reign in life* with Jesus Christ. No doubt the condition of the believer in Christ is far more favorable than that of our first parents, and their future felicity is much more assured than could have been that of finite beings wholly unacquainted with evil. And besides the glorious character of Deity has been exemplified in a manner that was impossible in a universe wholly free from sin. And even the sin of the angels gave no room for this display of infinite love and mercy since their case did not admit of mercy. They were irretrievably lost.

18. Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

In these two verses the apostle declares that all that mankind lost in Adam is unconditionally restored through Christ. The *many made righteous* includes all the *many* who were *made sinners;* and this comprises the whole human race. As they sinned in Adam without any concurrence of their wills, so they are restored in Christ without condition on their part. Jesus Christ entirely "taketh away" this "sin of the world." It was imputed to us in Adam, through Christ it is not imputed to us. It is true that un-

holiness of nature is not taken away, if we live to become responsible, but it is not imputed to us so as to condemn us until by free choice we elect to retain it. "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." If in the first moment of conscious responsibility we were to choose the will of God, no condemnation would ever be experienced. But this no one has ever done, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

20. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

The design of the law is here plainly set forth. Where there was no law there was no transgression. The law was given to multiply transgression. It was not intended as a means of salvation but as a means of condemnation. "The law worketh wrath." How strange that men should cling to a law that was made only to condemn its subjects. Even the handwriting of ordinances was against us, and contrary to us, yet how men hold on to these ordinances as if they were friends to grace. "Ye that desire to be under the law," writes the apostle, "do ye not hear the law?" The law entered to increase condemnation; Christ came to save from condemnation. But it may be asked, "why increase the offence?" I answer to

convince men of their innate sinfulness that they might be forced to come to Christ for salvation. (See my sermon on Design of the Law, in Sermons on Familiar Subjects.) As to how *grace did much more abound*, see comments on verses 15 to 17.

21. That as sin has resigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sin has reigned unto death, both physical and spiritual death. We are told that the law is the instrument with which sin kills. It condemned men because of their unholiness, which made them obnoxious to the holy law, and physical death was inflicted also. When our first parents sinned, speaking after the manner of men, two courses were open to Deity. Either the penalty could be inflicted upon the culprit alone, thus extinguishing the race, or they could be allowed to become the progenitors of a fallen race, obnoxious to the holy law, God providing a Redeemer through whom they could be unconditionally restored to what they had lost through no fault of their own. God chose the latter course. And now as sin has had its reign, God desires that grace may have its reign also. But grace cannot bring us to eternal life without the concurrence of our own wills. If we agree with God's purpose of mercy toward us, and become workers together with Him in the accomplishing of

that purpose, then *grace shall reign unto eternal life* in our cases. If we "frustrate the grace of God" it will be otherwise.

General Observations.

Concerning the doctrine of justification there are two common errors, of which it may be well to speak. The first is the confounding justification with pardon of sin. They are often used synonymously, but they never mean the same thing. Pardon is the act of passing over offences; justification is God's decision as to man's relation to His law, as to innocence or guilt. To justify is to pronounce the adjudged person clear. If the two words, pardon and justification, mean the same thing, then one can always be substituted for the other. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Ye are they that justify yourselves before men." They did not pardon themselves. God is said to be justified, "That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings." Also in I Tim. III–16, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, etc." Here pardon is inadmissible. In the case of sinners pardon is necessary in order to justification, but is not justification.

The second mistake is in supposing that justification is a lower state of grace preceding sanctification. Justification and sanctification cannot be compared thus with each other. Two things to be

compared must be of the same kind; but justification is a legal work done for us, while sanctification is a moral work done in us. Hence one cannot be held as higher than the other. It is also held that justification precedes sanctification, which is a mistake. It is true that the Old Testament believers were justified while not really sanctified; but holiness was imputed to them since provision was not yet made for their cleansing. Both inward and outward righteousness were imputed to them, or they could not have been justified, since God's law demands a perfect heart as well as a perfect life. But now, under the gospel age, inward holiness is attainable, and is freely provided for believers; consequently we cannot be justified without it. In his description of the results of justification in the preceding chapter, the apostle assumes that the justified man is sanctified also. He declares in the case of the man justified by faith, that "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given him." Now it is acknowledged on all hands that men are sanctified when the Holy Ghost is given. This was true at Pentecost, and is always true. We conclude then that men must be sanctified or holy, either actually or by imputation, before they can be justified. Since Pentecost, men are actually made holy by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Since grace has abounded far beyond the effects of the first sin, so that it covers our actual transgression, bringing glory to God, by affording his creatures new views of the beauties of his character, shall we not continue to sin that grace may the more abound? Such a question might seem foolish, because we might suppose no one would ever imagine it proper to suggest or maintain such a proposition, did we not know that it has actually been suggested and maintained, both in ancient and modern times. In fact it is generally held that believers do continue in sin, whether it is done to cause the grace of God to abound or for some other reason. The apostle's reply answers and refutes all such theories.

2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Not at all, or by no means, is the proper translation of the apostle's answer. We shall not continue in sin that grace may abound, nor for any other

reason, because it is impossible. Many persons deem it impossible for believers to live without sin, but St. Paul sees it to be impossible for them to live in sin. How can we live in sin if we are dead to it? The contradiction is manifest and obvious. We can no more live in sin if we are dead to it, than we can live in this world when dead to it. Death separates and makes us free from everything that we are dead to. Prove that a Christian is dead to sin and the conclusion that he cannot live in it is inevitable. But is the Christian believer dead to sin? Yes, for

3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

This passage is often misunderstood and misapplied. It is generally supposed that Christian baptism is here made the type of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. And arguments are drawn from this in favor of immersion as the proper mode. But this is clearly a misconception as I will show. In the first place such an explanation violates the law governing type and antitype. The type being natural or carnal must represent something spiritual. But the exegesis in question makes one natural thing, *viz.*, Christ's death, burial and resurrection, a figure of another natural

thing, *viz.*, water baptism. It is therefore inadmissible. Then it invalidates the apostle's argument. He has asserted that believers are dead to sin, and is proceeding to prove it. He does so by their baptism. But if he referred to water baptism his argument would utterly fail him. It is patent to every one that water baptism does not make men dead to sin. But it may be said, that baptized persons ought to be dead to sin, and so ought not to live in it; but the apostle is not trying to prove that believers *ought not* to live in sin, but that they *cannot*, and water baptism will not prove it. The apostle is not guilty of such lame logic as to try to make it prove his assumption. He must therefore refer to some other baptism. That he does so the force of the language used clearly shows. First, it is said that *we are buried with Him*. Here is a continuous burial; the thing buried continues to remain so. This is not true in water baptism. Secondly, we are said to be buried *into death*. This is not the case in water baptism; it is burial *into water*. But it may be asked, Is not immersion a type of death? No, it is a type of burial. Thirdly, if our baptism is a type of Christ's burial and resurrection, to be in accordance with nature, we must have some dead thing to be buried. It is improper to bury any living thing. In water baptism it is the living man that is buried, And fourthly, the body

buried does not rise to a new life, but to the same physical life enjoyed previously. Water baptism, then, utterly fails to meet the case. Instead of our baptism being a type of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, the latter is the type and our baptism is the antetype. It is therefore a spiritual baptism, or the baptism of the Spirit. This corresponds to the type and fits the language here used. It can be said of this baptism that by it *we are buried into death.* That which is buried remains buried, after having been crucified and killed. It is the *old man* that is crucified, consequently it is the *old man* that is buried. It is the *new man* that is raised up to walk in newness of life.

5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection:

If we have been planted together in that which corresponds to *His death*, that is, the crucifixion of the old man and his burial into death, by the agency of the Holy Spirit; *we shall be also* in that which corresponds to *His resurrection;* a new life of God in the soul, and a holy walk in accordance therewith. There can be no mistake or failure here. If we have the one we must have the other. But we may have a carnal ordinance without any new life following. Hence a carnal ordinance cannot be meant.

6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

It is the body of sin, the carnal mind, the flesh, *our old man*, that is crucified and consequently buried, to remain so forever, that it *might be destroyed*. If this is done when we are baptized into Christ, then there can be no more warfare with the flesh; the internal contention, the struggle against an evil heart is past, and peace reigns in the heart of the believer. But why is this body of sin destroyed? *That henceforth we should not serve sin.*

How plain, how reasonable is this. Yet how contrary to most man-made theology. How do men serve sin? Jesus says, "Verily, verily I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." To commit sin then, is to serve sin; so that it might read, "That henceforth we should not commit sin." Thus the apostle writes himself down a fanatic in the estimation of worldly-wise theologians of the present time.

7. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

The apostle then has proven his point; that God's spiritual people are dead to sin, and consequently free from it, since death frees us from anything we are dead to. This freedom is from inward, as well as from outward sin. In fact, there can be no free-

dom from the latter without freedom from the former, since inward unholiness is the cause producing outward transgression as its legitimate fruit.

8. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. His death was a death unto sin, His life is a life unto God. If we be dead with Him, and we must be if baptized into His death, we are dead to sin, free from sin. Then we must have a new life also, a life hid with Christ in God, and we will live to God as Jesus does. Christ being risen from the dead *dieth no more*, so we are raised from a death in sin to a life of obedience, to die no more by sinning, as sin brings death; but are to live constantly to God. We are therefore to *reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.* The Greek word (logidzesthe) here translated "to reckon," signifies "to reckon, compute, number, infer, conclude, consider, etc." Having computed, reckoned up the problem, we are to conclude that we are dead to sin; not figuratively or professedly dead, but dead

indeed; and just as truly alive unto God. We do not become dead because we reckon ourselves to be so, but we thus reckon because we find it to be actually the case.

12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

It is the generally accepted opinion that Christians are not able to live without committing sin. When it is shown that God's people are declared to be free from sin, it is often explained that this is true respecting their souls or spirits, but that sin still remains in their bodies, and continues to plague them. That a warfare is continually waged between the flesh (the body) and the spirit. Even John Bunyan, the good old dreamer, was hampered by such a theology; and in his Holy War in which he describes Immanuel's conquest of Mansoul, he represents Immanuel in His proclamation of terms to Diabolus, as declaring that Diabolus must evacuate the city of Mansoul; that he should be allowed to own no property there, nor to visit it, nor to hold any correspondence with any person in it. But notwithstanding this high-sounding proclamation, Immanuel is represented as not being able to carry out His plans and promises, as the Diabolonians burrowed in the walls of the city and could not be dislodged; so that they could from this vantage ground make continual incursions into the city, and

keep up a constant turmoil, so that the city could have no peace nor rest. What a pity these Diabolonians could not have been smoked out of their hiding-places. The only hope for peace in Mansoul was in the destruction of its walls. So death must complete the work begun by Jesus Christ. He cannot save to the uttermost; death must finish the task for Him. How dishonoring to God is this. And how unphilosophic. Death, the result of sin, must turn about and destroy its own cause. Such is the teaching of human theology, but not of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures. The sinfulness of the body is not only not taught in the scriptures, but the exact opposite is taught. We are told that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and that the temple of the Lord is holy, not sinful. This domination of the body over the soul is also unreasonable, and untrue to fact. The body is the servant of the soul, not its master. The apostle Paul asserts that he kept under his body and brought it into subjection, not that it kept him under subjection. It is not only in our souls then sin must not reign but also in our *mortal bodies*. We are not to obey any sinful lusts or desires.

13. Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

It is here assumed that believers have control of their physical members, able to yield them as servants to whom they will. They are forbidden to yield them as instruments to sin, and are commanded to yield them as instruments of righteousness to God. If they are able to obey these injunctions they need not commit sin. If they are not able to obey, then God is a hard Master, and his commandments are not only grievous but impracticable; an unreasonable, rather than a reasonable service. You choose your own horn of the dilemma.

14. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

While believers were under the law, and before grace came, no provision having yet been made to take away sin, they were under the dominion of sin, and could not but be so. But since grace has come, and Christ has died to "make an end of sin" and to "bring in everlasting righteousness," there is no excuse for remaining under sin. Believers being made dead to sin in their baptism, and consequently being freed from its dominion, sin cannot have dominion over them. The apostle does not say, "sin ought not," but, *sin shall not have dominion over you.* How can it have dominion over the man who is dead to it, and freed from it?

15. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

The law declared, The soul that sinneth it shall die. But grace offers forgiveness for sin. If we can have our sins pardoned may we not presume upon that grace and go on sinning of choice, if not by compulsion? The law made sinning dangerous; but does not grace make sinning safe? Why should we then avoid sin? It might be supposed that no one would be foolish enough to ask such a question. On the contrary, that the believer may continue to commit sin with impunity seems to be the deliberate, confirmed opinion of Christendom. The doctrine here so clearly taught by the apostle Paul, that believers are free from the dominion of sin, and that they may not commit sin, is almost universally denied and vehemently opposed and denounced. Its advocates are treated with contempt and derision. It is contended that through grace believers may go sinning on their way to heaven, though unbelievers are damned for the same conduct; that Christ saves men not from sin, but from its consequences only, so that by grace sin is made innoxious and harmless; that faith makes void the law and sets it aside, so that believers may treat it with silent contempt. It is easy to detect the variance between the teachings of modern theologians and the teachings of St. Paul; they are as wide apart as the antipodes.

16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

It should be plain to all that no man can be the servant of God while committing sin, since whosoever committeth sin is its servant or slave. And as no man can serve two masters, while he serves sin he cannot be the servant of God. Notwithstanding we may be under grace, still *sin* (voluntary transgression) *is unto death.* The law is not abrogated, only suspended in the case of those who believe in Jesus, and so do not willingly transgress. The apostle does not know of a class, now supposed to be so common, which serves both masters, one in believing and the other in sinning.

17. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

What the form of doctrine was which St. Paul delivered to both Jews and Greeks, we are told in Acts XX–21, *viz.*, "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." This form of doctrine *obeyed from the heart* will bring any soul to salvation.

18. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

They could not become servants of a new master until freed from obligations to the old one. This is self-evident.

19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

By speaking *after the manner of men*, the apostle probably means that he uses natural relations to illustrate spiritual ones. He represents righteousness and sin as two masters, to one or the other of which men are servants or slaves. This was easily understood and it made the spiritual truth he wished to convey more easily grasped. The reason he gives for so doing is the *infirmity of their flesh*. By this phrase he cannot refer to any physical weakness, and so must refer to their spiritual state. In that case he speaks of them as being carnal or unregenerate. But he has just proven that real saints have the "flesh" or "old man" crucified, dead and buried. How can we reconcile this apparent contradiction? We find the same thing in most or all of St. Paul's epistles, and men's minds have been much confused thereby. This may be one of the things "hard to be understood" to which St. Peter refers when speaking of St. Paul's writings. But he declares that it is the unlearned and the unstable who wrest these things to their own destruction. Spiritual men can understand these apparent discrepancies and can reconcile them. To others these scriptures are a stone of

stumbling. As it is impossible that men can be free from sin and slaves to sin, carnal and spiritual both at the same time, we cannot understand that these opposite states can belong to the same persons at the same time. The explanation is this. In the various congregations addressed by the apostle, there were two classes. There were those who were really saved, born again, sanctified, new creatures in Christ Jesus. There were also those who had been convinced by the preaching of the gospel, who had come out from Judaism or paganism, and who consorted with the real saints, who as yet were not saved from their sins. Their repudiation of their old religion had made a great gulf between them and their former associates, and they were reckoned among the Christians, though not really such as yet. The apostle recognizes the two classes as he writes, but does not differentiate them, but when addressing either class he writes as if he meant the whole congregation. For instance he addresses the Corinthians as "those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." This would seem to include the whole congregation. Then he says shortly afterward, "I have not written unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal. For ye are yet carnal and walk as men." This again would appear to include the whole congregation. But the sanctified ones were not carnal, walking as other men. We

must distinguish these two classes and recognize what belongs to each of them, or the apostle's writings will be to us a jumble of contradictions. In writing his epistles he accommodates himself to the capacities of the most unspiritual in the congregations addressed.

20. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

In other words, the apostle would say, "to show you that you are now, as believers, free from sin, I would remind you that when ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness." When men are the slaves of sin they feel no compulsion toward righteousness. They are free to serve the devil at their pleasure. If on the other hand they become the servants of righteousness, the servants of God, they should be just as free to serve God, and feel as little compulsion to serve sin and Satan. The fruits of Satan's service they are ashamed of after conversion. They take no pleasure in recalling their wicked conduct, nor do they feel like speaking of these things except in the way of humble confession. The remembrance of these things is grievous to them, and they know that the end of these things is death. All their fruit while in the service of sin was only

evil continually. They never inadvertently fell into righteousness; they suffered no lapse into holiness.

22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Why not? If while we were the servants of the devil all our fruit was sin unto death, why since becoming the servants of God should not all our fruit be unto holiness? If when the servants of sin we are free from righteousness, why when we become the servants of righteousness should we not be free from sin? The apostle declares this to be the case; the theologians generally differ with him. It is not in harmony with their experience. Would it not be better to get an experience in harmony with the scriptures than to wrest the scriptures to make them fit our experience? God will be found true though it make every man a liar.

23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Death is *the wages of sin;* it is what we earn or merit by a life of disobedience to God. But eternal life is not earned or merited; it is the free gift of God. As we did not lose eternal life through the sin of the first Adam, we do not inherit it through the death of the second Adam. It is the result of grace

abounding. The Christian is to be rewarded according to his works, but eternal life is no part of that reward. It is freely given to the believer.

General Observations.

In the chapter just considered the doctrine of the believer's freedom from sin is clearly and conclusively set forth. This is not done inferentially but directly and declaratively, in language that could not well be more plain or less open to misconception. He shows the necessity for the destruction of inward sin, the sin of the heart, in order that outward sin may be avoided. He takes care to answer objections that may be urged against the doctrine, so that the apologist for sin has no ground left to stand upon. The eighth chapter teaches the same great truth; but it is generally supposed that the seventh contradicts both. This chapter is a stronghold for the advocates of sin in believers. But I hope to show that this is a sad error, and that the apostle is not so poor a theologian and so lame a logician as to so stultify himself. I trust I have shown that the baptism referred to in the chapter just considered is our baptism by the Holy Ghost, which makes us dead to sin and alive to God. Water baptism is not referred to, and there is no intimation that it was in the mind or thought of the

apostle. Yet this scripture is relied on by many to prove a particular mode of water baptism. This illustrates the liberties taken with the scriptures, and the unwarranted use which is often made of passages of Holy Writ. They are made witnesses to prove points upon which they are totally silent.

CHAPTER VII.

1. Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

The apostle while addressing the whole church at Rome seems to have the Jewish members more particularly in his mind, and his arguments are suited to their needs especially. To the Jews he refers in the remark, *I speak to them that know the law.* He is about to illustrate the relation of God's people to the law and to the gospel by the marriage state. He first states the fact in the form of a question, of men's subjection to law as long as they live. This is self-evident and needs no proof.

2. For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband.

This is plain and clear though not much considered in these days of easy divorce. The wife is bound by the law of God to her husband, and is under the law of her husband. He is supposed to be her lord and to rule over her, as saith the scripture, "Thy

desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee."

3. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

To carry out the simile it should read, *The law is dead to you.* But the apostle uses the other expression as being less offensive to the Jewish believers, and either statement of the case means the same thing, since if I am dead to the law, the law is dead to me. It was a tender point with the Jewish believers to accept this teaching concerning the freedom of God's people from the law; and St. Paul the especial apostle to the Gentiles made himself especially offensive to the Jews by teaching this important truth. He therefore always states it to them as mildly as possible. God's people were formerly under the dominion of the law; it was their spiritual husband; and they could not become the bride of Christ while the former husband was alive. This statement of the case forced the Jewish converts to acknowledge that the law was dead to them, or that they were not the bride of Christ. There was no escaping the logic of the case.

5. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

This is a quite literal application of the figure. *The motions of sins* refers to the awakening in us of unholy tempers and propensities, which stirred in us, *in our members*, when the demands of God's law were recognized. The law is thus represented as the father of these internal sins, these stirrings of rebellion which arise in us when the law is applied. The reference is, no doubt, to the quickening of the offspring before birth. When this progeny of the law was *brought forth* or born it was *unto death*. The conduct developing from such motions of sins was sinful and so must be condemned. But when did these things occur? The answer is, *When we were in the flesh*. This does not mean, when we were in the body, for the apostle was not writing to disembodied spirits but to men still in the body. It must mean then, "When we were in our unregenerate state"; for it was then we were under the law.

6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

In this place it is expressly declared that the law is dead, and so believers are delivered from it. They are now married to another that they may *serve in newness of spirit*. The old manner of service, called

the oldness of the letter, was not acceptable to God, nor is it now. In another place we are declared to be "delivered from dead works" or works of death, "to serve the living God." The old way of service regarded nothing but the outward act, *the letter*. In this way a man might live in all good conscience, like Saul of Tarsus, ignorant of the real demands of the law, and full of self-complacency, while the spirit of the law was constantly outraged in his life. It is only when the law is seen in the light of God's truth through the Spirit, that God's commandments become "exceedingly broad"; then we recognize that it takes cognizance of all our affections, intentions, and motives. We cannot serve in newness of spirit, unless our spirits are renewed, transformed by the renewing of our minds. The new manner of serving God delivers us from slavery to the letter, and makes our service free.

7. What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

The effort is now begun to discover the cause of bad fruit resulting from the union of God's people and the law. *What shall we say then?* Shall we lay the blame for the result upon the law, the husband? *Is the law sin?* It is evident that the fault is in either the husband or the wife. No, the law

is not sin; for so far from the law being in harmony with sin, sin is aroused to action by its opposition to the law; and thus the law develops sin and causes it to manifest itself; as is declared in another place, For by the law is the knowledge of sin. It is only by means of the law that sin is known. *By the law is the knowledge of sin.* What sin? I answer all sin; there can be no outward sin where there is no law, since "where there is no law there is no transgression"; and of inward sin also, as the illustration proves. *I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* Lust or covetousness is an inward evil affection. The whole of the following argument proves that the design of the law is to discover and develop the sin of the heart. But if the law is needed to discover to us the sin of our hearts, carnality, original sin, as it is called, so long as we have any carnality we cannot dispense with the law; we need its offices. But if we need the law it is not yet dead to us, or we are not yet dead to it. But if the law, the first husband is not yet dead, we are still under its dominion; we are not yet loosed from the law of that husband. But if we are not, then we cannot yet be married to another husband, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. This is plain; so long as we need to be convinced of any sin, inward or outward, any carnality or unholiness of heart,

we still need the law as an instrument specially provided to do this work. Hence we cannot be married to Christ the new husband until the work is finished, so that the law may become dead to us forevermore. No one who is married to Christ needs any conviction for sin, inward or outward; for the law being dead to him he has no means to this end, unless there be some other way of knowing sin but by the law. This the apostle denies.

8. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead.

Sin was dead; that is, the sin of the heart was quiescent, so that its very existence was not suspected. But when the commandment came the sinful nature was roused, and it filled the mind with all kinds of desires in opposition to the commandment. The Greek word here rendered "concupiscence" is from a verb meaning "to set the heart upon, to desire, to desire ardently, to lust after." The translation is properly, "all manner of desires," but only of an evil nature.

9. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

This may be understood in two senses. All persons while not subjects of law because they are too young, or for any other reason, are alive without the law. They are free from condemnation. Then persons who

are destitute of that knowledge of sin, inward sin, which an application of the law brings to them, and who do those things which seem to them to be in obedience to God's requirements, may be said to be *alive without the law*. Saul of Tarsus was in this condition before his conviction for sin. Mr. Wesley describes this condition in his hymn,

"A goodly, formal saint
I long appeared in sight,
By self and Satan taught to paint
My tomb, my nature, white.
The pharisee within
Still undisturbed remained;
The strong-man, armed with guilt of sin,
Safe in his palace reigned."

It is when the light which comes is resisted, that condemnation begins. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." *The commandment comes* when the demands of God's holy law are discovered to us and made plain to our understandings. Then our carnal hearts rebel, because they are not subject to this law; and condemnation ensues and *we die*. We lose our self-complacency, our supposed goodness fades away, our own righteousness appears as filthy rags that fail to hide our spiritual nakedness.

This experience is thus described by Mr. Wesley:

"But ah, the jealous God
In my behalf came down;
Jesus Himself the stronger showed
And claimed me for His own;
My spirit he alarmed
And brought into distress;
He shook and bound the strong-man armed
In his self-righteousness.

"Faded my virtuous show,
My form without the power;
The sin-convincing Spirit blew
And blasted every flower."

A proper application of God's law will inevitably destroy deception, and develop and revive sin in us. It is impossible for sin to disguise or hide itself when touched by the law. Sin may assume very innocent appearances, as did Satan at the ear of Eve, when, as represented by Milton, he took the form of a toad; but the law like Uriel's spear, touching it, it perforce immediately assumes its proper shape and character.

10. And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

This does not mean that the law was given to sinners with the design of giving them life, for we are told just the contrary; that the law entered that the offense might abound. But that the law of God is designed to give life to all perfect and pure intel-

ligences, who maintain that moral state in which they were created. The fact that any moral agent finds this law so ordained, to be a means of death instead of life, argues something radically wrong in his case. What that wrong is, the apostle proceeds to point out.

11. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.

There are two ways in which sin may deceive and slay. It may prompt to resistance of God's law as unreasonable or unnecessary; or it may encourage an attempt to maintain justification by obeying the law in our own strength, which will inevitably result in failure. In either case we incur condemnation, and so die.

12. Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

The responsibility for the evil results of this union of God's people and the law, is not found in the law, the husband; the law is holy and cannot be blamed for such bad fruit. The cause must be, therefore, in the wife. The next point to be settled is, where, in us, is the evil to be found?

13. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

Was the law, then, which is good, the cause of my death? No, not at all. It was only the occasion or instrument of my condemnation. Sin, that unholy rebellious principle, dwelling in my nature, was the cause. And the natural inference is, that if sin can use so good an instrument as God's holy law to slay me with, it must be a very virulent, wicked principle. Our evil natures do not seem very bad, and indeed in many respects do not seem bad at all, until tested by God's holy law. It is then that sin *appears sin*, and its true nature is recognized.

14. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

St. Paul, in this argument, speaks of himself as an example of one of God's people under the law. *The law*, the husband, is spiritual; I, representing the wife, *am carnal*, *sold under sin*. The union then is an unequal one, and not productive of good fruit. To be spiritual is to be holy and good; to be carnal is to be unholy, fleshly, wicked. Yea, I am *sold under sin*. I am in a state of bondage to sin which has dominion over me. My slavery is involuntary, as I am sold into it, and cannot help myself.

15. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

This shows a condition of complete helplessness and bondage. If I cannot do the things I choose to

do, and cannot avoid doing the things I hate, my case is indeed deplorable, and desperate. It could not well be worse. To ascribe such an experience to a Christian believer, as is often done, is to libel Christianity, as a fraud and a failure. Christians are said to be called to liberty, and Jesus is represented as coming to set captives free and to break yokes of bondage. If the condition here described is Christian liberty, what worse could bondage be? We must remember that the believer's state under the law as husband is being described.

16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

The fact that I am unwilling to transgress the law is proof that I acknowledge its righteousness.

17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

That is to say that transgression is not a voluntary act on my part, but I am forced to it by indwelling sin; I am not able to resist the power of an evil heart which defies God's law.

18. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

It seems that the apostle fearing that some one might misunderstand him and imagine that he might be speaking of his Christian experience, notwithstanding the plain drift of the argument, has thrown

in an explanatory clause in parenthesis; *viz.*, "That is, in my flesh," but all in vain; so anxious are some men to excuse, and plead for, sin that they will insist that St. Paul is giving his Christian experience. By his "flesh" he cannot mean his body, as is sometimes taught, because he tells us in another epistle that the Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is said to dwell in us. (Cor. III–16 & VI–19.) It is not therefore true of the body that in it dwelleth no good thing. The word must therefore have a spiritual meaning as it generally has in the New Testament, and means the unregenerate state. The apostle means to assert that in him, in his unregenerate state, there dwelt no good thing.

And if this was true of the apostle Paul it is true of every man by nature, as we are all alike. This is as strong a statement of the doctrine of natural depravity as can be made. If there is in us by nature nothing good, then are we totally depraved; that is, totally deprived of good. Whatever good there may be in an unregenerate person, is the result of grace, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, but it does not dwell in us. Our natural hearts are not the abodes of good, but it is only a transient visitor there. But there is one thing the man possesses to whom the commandment has come. He has the power to will. *To will is present* with him. Much has been said

and written on the freedom of the human will. That the will is naturally free in respect to natural things I have no doubt. But it is not naturally free in respect to spiritual things. Without the help of the Holy Spirit we have no power to desire good, and consequently no power to will in the direction of that which is good. The Lord must work in us both to will, and to do, His good pleasure. But this He does for us unconditionally, through His truth. Our freedom of will is proportionate to our light. We are able to will all the good we see.

But in our unregenerate state we have no power of performance of that which is good. True, we can perform the outward act which has the appearance of obedience, and which deceives many; but real obedience is of the heart. John Wesley writes:

> "I see Thy perfect law requires
> Truth in the inward parts;
> Our full consent, our whole desires,
> Our undivided hearts."

This is impossible to the man whose moral nature is in revolt against God's law.

19. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

In many cases this is true in the outward act. The sinner is carried away by the power of his evil passions and propensities against which his will is pitted in

vain. But even if the outward act of disobedience is restrained, still he disobeys. Since he that hateth his brother is a murderer, he is a murderer while the hated person still lives, and his hands are unstained with blood.

20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

It is my sinful nature that is responsible for my sin. It is because of the impossibility of real obedience under the law that it is said, "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." He will wink at such a state no longer after the gospel is come to make men free.

21. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

The Greek word "nomōs" has "law" for its primary meaning, but it also means "custom, habit, etc." The meaning here seems to be this: *I find a law*, that is, I find that it invariably occurs, as a habit or custom, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. This is not exceptional or occasional, but it is constantly the case.

22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The apostle still speaks in the person of the believer under the law, which is that of the awakened sinner

under the gospel. For the awakened sinner is in the same spiritual state as the believer under the former dispensation, still carnal and unregenerate, but more sensible of this state of helpless bondage, since he has more light. The application has been gradually transferred from the former to the latter, making it descriptive of present conditions. If we now have the faith Old Covenant believers had, we will not remain under the law, but will at once be married to the new husband. But until faith reaches the point where it appropriates Christ's merits and finds freedom from sin, we are still under the law of perfect obedience as well as under the dominion of sin. In this state, after the commandment comes, and we are aroused to a sense of sin and get a glimpse of the beauty of holiness, we begin to hate the one and to desire the other. We see both, because the Holy Spirit convinces us of sin and righteousness according to Christ's promise. Then as we yield to the influences of the Holy Spirit, we experience a growing *delight in the law of God after the inward man.* We see the inadequacy of mere outward service, and desire to obey with all our heart and soul. The other form of service in which we may have formerly trusted we see to be but dead works, or works of death, and we wish to serve the living God.

23. But I see another law in my members, warring against

the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

As has been said before, the attempt is here made to locate the cause of evil fruit while we are under the dominion of the law, the old husband. It has been shown that the law itself is not responsible, being holy, just, and good. The fault is therefore in us. But not in our knowledge or the want of it, for we see what is right; not in our desire, for we delight in the law of God; not in our wills, for we will to do good but find no ability to carry out our good resolutions. The cause of our failure to glorify God is found to be in our inmost nature; in a sinful principle called *sin dwelling in us.* It is also called "the flesh," "the old man," "the body of sin," "the carnal mind," "the law of sin and death." This evil heart controls us in spite of our efforts and struggles, and holds us in captivity, so that we cannot do the things that we would. We would love God but we cannot. We would love our neighbors as ourselves, but we cannot do this either; and as these two things contain the sum of all obedience we fail utterly.

24. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

When we have become conscious of our slavery to inbred sin, we conceive an abhorrence of it and long

for deliverance from its control. We find ourselves helpless and strengthless, utterly unable to free ourselves however much we may tug at our chains. We look in vain for help from others; they are as powerless as ourselves. Religious ceremonies, outward ordinances, give us no relief.

> "Not bleeding bird nor bleeding beast,
> Nor hyssop branch nor sprinkling priest,
> Nor running brook, nor flood, nor sea,
> Can wash the dismal stain away."

We are like a prisoner chained to a companion who is already dead, and compelled to drag the repulsive corpse about with us.

25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Deliverance is to be found through Jesus Christ and through Him alone. When we were without strength he in due time died for the ungodly. That he can and will deliver his people from this bondage to indwelling sin is a glorious fact, too seldom realized or understood. Yet it is a fact, most clearly stated, not only in this place, but in many other scriptures. The latter part of this verse is a résumé, or second statement, of the points already brought out in the argument. The apostle himself, or any other awakened man, with his *mind*, his desires and purposes, serves

the law of God; but with his carnal nature serves the law of sin; and his carnal nature prevails so that the efforts of his will are nullified and made abortive. To suppose that the apostle is here speaking of his Christian experience, is to assume that he is drawing conclusions concerning Christian experience from premises which speak only of experiences under the law. This would be utterly illogical. Then it would be a contradiction of his statement that those who are in Christ have the "old man" crucified, destroyed and buried. Also of the statement that sin shall not have dominion over Christians. Those who thus teach may do so through ignorance, but it certainly has the appearance of wilful ignorance.

General Observations.

It is sometimes imagined that the last verse of this chapter describes the Christian conflict or warfare, a warfare between the moral nature and the will, or the flesh and the spirit. This is an evident mistake; as the Christian is described as being free from the flesh. "Our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed." We can have no conflict with an enemy nailed to a cross and killed. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with

its affections and lusts." We are instructed to put off the old man with his deeds before we put on the new man. If we had to war against our natures we would never be victors, but always would be vanquished. Nor does the Christian war against his body, as some suppose. He keeps it under subjection; but "we wrestle not against flesh and blood," either our own or that of others, but "against principalities and powers." The Christian warfare is outward; "without were fightings," says the apostle. Within he has peace. "In me ye shall have peace," Christ declares. "Great peace have they that love thy law." It is plain the Christian has no outward peace; he is in an enemy's land, surrounded by implacable foes. If there be a continual conflict going on within him where is his peace? How then can it be said of him, Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose heart is stayed on Thee? Reader, if this state of inward conflict is your experience, it proves you to be yet under the law where you cannot do the things that you would.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

This conclusion is drawn from the arguments found in the VIth chapter rather than from the VIIth, as the VIIth does not treat at all of Christian experience. If it did, a very different conclusion would be drawn from it. The VIIth chapter is an interruption of the argument of the VIth in order to make an explanation. In the VIIIth, the argument is resumed. If there is *no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, it must be from one of two causes. Either they do not commit sin, or their sins are not imputed to them. Sin is a transgression of the law under which we live. If the Christian were left under the old law, any violation of the letter of which brought guilt, he would not be free from condemnation. But he is under grace. Is he then without law? No; he is under the law of Christ, the new commandment, the law of love. To him, love is the fulfilling of the law. To violate that law would be to bring upon

himself condemnation. He has no condemnation because he fulfils that law. If this were not so, and if his freedom from condemnation were the result of the nonimputation of the sins he commits, then he would have no sense of guilt, and would need to ask no forgiveness. The fact that professed Christians feel a sense of guilt and condemnation for their wrong doing is proof positive that their sins are imputed to them; for if their hearts condemn them, "God is greater than their hearts" and condemns them also. The last clause of this verse is supposed by Dr. Adam Clarke to be an interpolation caused by the mistake of the transcriber of the manuscript. It is wanting in many of the principal manuscripts and versions, and is not needed to complete the sense. It is properly found at the end of the fourth verse but should probably be left out here.

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

There is here a change in the law, or dominating power in the believer. The law of sin is displaced by the *law of the Spirit of life*. The latter makes us free from the former. The two are not found holding disputed and joint possession of the believer, lusting against each other. The law of sin and death, the old man, is destroyed, and the other law has undisputed dominion. For this reason there is no con-

demnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. The old man is put off and his deeds are put off with him; those deeds which brought condemnation.

3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

What the law could not do God has done by sending His Son for a sin-offering. What the law could not do was to produce the fruits of obedience. It could not do this because of our unholy nature which the law had no power to correct or remove. It was therefore *weak through the flesh.* The most pregnant statement in this verse is that God has *condemned sin in the flesh.* Under the law it was the fruits that were condemned, and consequently the one producing the fruits. He brought forth fruit unto death. But under the gospel it is the sin in the flesh that is condemned to be destroyed; that which caused the bad fruit under the law. The law could not remove or destroy this, but Jesus can and does. This is a vital point in Christianity; that Jesus destroys the hindrance to obedience, which made obedience impossible; that he came "to make an end of sin" and "to bring in everlasting righteousness." To make an end of what sin? Sin dwelling in us. That being destroyed, the fountain being dried up, the streams will cease to flow. How strange that this

truth should be so generally forgotten or ignored. Yet if Jesus does not do this for us He does no more to save us from sin than the law did. What advantage then in the change of husbands?

4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Sin in the flesh is condemned that the *righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.* This never can be done until the old carnal nature is destroyed. When we are brought into Christ our hearts, or moral natures, are made holy and perfect. God's law demands a perfect heart, and this demand is met under the gospel. But the Greek preposition here used (en) also signifies the means or instrument by which anything is done, and is rendered "with," "by means of," or "by." So we may read "by us" as well as "in us." The righteousness of the law is fulfilled by us. Not the letter of the law, for this we cannot in our present imperfect state fulfil. The righteousness of the law is love, as our Lord Himself testifies; on the love of God and the love of our neighbor, hang all the law and the prophets. The man who is in Christ Jesus can, and does, love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. Such *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

To be *after the flesh* is to be fleshly or carnal; to be *after the Spirit* is to be spiritual. Every man follows the bent of his nature. If he be carnal, he minds carnal things; if he be spiritual, he minds the things of the spirit. His conduct and the things in which he is specially interested testify to his spiritual state.

6. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

To be carnally minded is to be separated from God, the source of spiritual life. There can be no unity between God and a carnal, unholy, heart. There can be no spiritual life without unity with God. The spiritual man is in fellowship and unity with God and hence enjoys spiritual *life and peace.*

7. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Here we have a definition of the carnal mind; it is *enmity against God.* This is its nature or essence. Take away the enmity and you destroy the carnal mind. "The fool hath said in his heart, no God." That is where the idea in his head comes from. "The wish is father to the thought." As to hate one's brother is to be his murderer, so to hate God is to be His murderer. What an awful indictment of unrenewed human nature is this! Every human being has in him by nature a principle that would blot God

out of His universe if it had the power. You do not believe it? Better then cease pretending to believe God's Revelation. Of course such a principle *is not subject to the law of God;* it unceasingly revolts and rebels against that law. In the nature of things it cannot be subject. Neither can the man be subject who is dominated by such a principle.

8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

This conclusion necessarily follows. If the carnal mind is not, and cannot be, subject to God's law, they that are carnal *cannot please God.* Since the flesh has been doomed to destruction and provisions are made for freeing God's people from it, there is no excuse for retaining it or for being controlled by it. For if it is retained it will control and enslave us, as the apostle shows in the preceding chapter. Some persons imagine that they do serve and please God while they still possess the carnal mind, but this contradicts both reason and revelation. We must put off the old man before we can put on the new man; and old things must pass away before all things can become new. All who are in Christ are thus new creatures. No man is a child of God who retains the carnal mind.

9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

But ye are not in the flesh, that is ye are not carnal, still in possession of the carnal mind, *if the spirit of God dwell in you.* Some profess to understand by the word "flesh" here used, the mortal body is meant; that it is the great hindrance to obedience. But these Roman Christians are declared to be not in the flesh, and the apostle was not writing to disembodied spirits. There are few absurdities to which men will not stoop to defend or excuse sin. The proof that they were not in the flesh is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It follows that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in those who are carnal, or in the flesh. So those who are carnal do not belong to Christ, for unless his Spirit dwells in them they are *none of His*. In I Cor., III, 1–5, the persons addressed are declared to be yet carnal. It is often supposed that these persons who are yet carnal are yet Christians. But this cannot be true; for if they are carnal they have not His Spirit, as the possession of the Holy Spirit is said to prove its possessors to be spiritual. And if they have not His Spirit they are none of His. They cannot be Christians who do not belong to God.

10. And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

Our bodies are not yet redeemed, no not of the holiest persons. The penalty of the first sin is still exacted, and the salvation or redemption of our bodies

is still a subject of hope. I have heard of some enthusiasts who declare they shall never die; that their bodies are already immortal. It is useless to contend with such persons, but it is safe to leave them to the logic of events. It is not uncommon to hear a certain class of professed Christians declare that they are saved, soul and body. Just what they mean by this expression I do not know, nor do I think they know either. But our souls or spirits are made alive by the indwelling Spirit, *because of righteousness*. As our bodies are dead or condemned to death, and so dead in a legal sense, yet our spirits are made alive by the Spirit of God dwelling in us, because of Christ's righteousness; His sacrificial atonement.

11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

This, no doubt, refers to the resurrection of the body, which is promised us, and is not to be understood as a contradiction of the preceding verse. Our outward man perisheth, though the inward man be renewed day by day. To quicken signifies to bring to life. And as our bodies are dead only in law, not yet actually, they cannot be now quickened until they die first.

12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

We are no longer under any obligation nor necessity *to live after the flesh*, since the flesh is crucified and destroyed. We are under no compulsion to commit sin, as so many suppose, but are free to live after the Spirit; to live in obedience to the law of Christ, a liberty so persistently denied and so seldom realized.

13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

There is no exception to this rule. No religious profession, nor ecclesiastical relation, will nullify it. *To live after the flesh*, to live in sin, is to die. And they that are after the flesh, carnal, do mind the things of the flesh. So to be carnally minded is death. There are therefore no carnal Christians. A carnal Christian would be as great an anomaly as a holy devil. The body mentioned whose deeds must be mortified, is the "body of sin," the flesh, not the physical man. The literal body has no deeds. All sin proceeds from within, out of the heart, so Jesus declares. That is a strange doctrine that would make of the body a scapegoat for the sins of an unholy heart; that teaches us to despise the body, to contemn it as a clog to the soul, a shackle to be cast off with joy; the jailer of the soul, which can find liberty only in escaping from this prison. Such teaching is nonsense, without any warrant in reason or

scripture. The body is an integral part of the man, without which he is not a man but a disembodied spirit. True it is now under the curse, and subject to natural evil, sickness, pain and death; but that is not its fault. Redemption has been provided for it as well as for the spirit, and it is honored in being made the temple of the Holy Ghost. We do not honor God by neglecting, despising, nor dishonoring our bodies.

To *mortify the deeds of the body* or flesh is to destroy the old man and so put him off with his deeds. He who does this *shall live;* live to God here and with God hereafter.

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The doctrine of the leadings of the Holy Spirit is one that is generally neglected and ignored, but is, on the other hand, sometimes caricatured and abused by fanatical zeal. Without the personal teachings and guidance of the Holy Spirit we can never learn God's truth. Without it our religion will be dead formalism; there is no article of the creed that Satan more abhors than, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." In all ages of Christianity when there has been a reformation, or a revival of vital godliness, Satan has endeavored to make this doctrine ridiculous or detestable by influencing weak heads, with more zeal than

knowledge, to indulge in fanatical excesses professedly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This frightens prudent souls and makes them choose rather the quiet of spiritual death. But the truth of God remains the same, that His children are led by His Spirit. When the Holy Ghost was promised it was said, "He shall guide you into all truth." He is our pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. Only such as are led by Him are His sons and daughters.

15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The *spirit of bondage to fear* was the spirit of the former dispensation. At the giving of the law at Sinai, the Israelites were terrified by the manifestations of the Divine presence; and we are told that they of the old covenant were all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. This slavish fear of God and this bondage to fear of any kind is removed under the gospel, and is replaced by a filial confidence in God, as our Father. The Holy Spirit is called the *Spirit of adoption* because by it we are made the children of God. We are said to be born of the spirit, since by its agency our moral nature is changed into the image of God. Since by nature we are not God's children, but are made so by the

Holy Spirit, we are said to be adopted. By the testimony of the Spirit we recognize God to be our Father, and we can never know that we are God's children without this testimony. The popular doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, is a virtual denial of redemption by Christ, and of our adoption into the heavenly family, by which we become brethren. It is thinly veiled infidelity.

16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

The fact of the witness of the Spirit could not be more clearly stated. Those who deny the direct witness of the Spirit endeavor to avoid the force of this passage by claiming that the Spirit witnesses through the written word. But this could not be a personal witness, nor will it accord with the statement that we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Besides, the New Testament, which contains the conditions of salvation, was not extant when this epistle was written. But the language of the text forbids such an explanation. The Spirit does not testify mediately through a third person, but the *Spirit itself* does the witnessing. This is express and undeniable. It also agrees with the experience of spiritual men. If I have not this indubitable witness of sonship, I am not a son.

17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

This naturally follows, that we as the *children* of God are His *heirs*. And as we are the brethren of Christ we are *joint heirs* with Him to all that the Father possesses. He, as the elder brother, inherits the greater share. Our *suffering with Him* is the necessary proof of our sonship, since he that is without chastisement is declared to be a bastard and not a son. We are told that though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; so must we do. Unless we are under discipline, we are regarded as being outside of the family; for what good father does not discipline his children? Rebuke and chastisement, then, are the marks of sonship. Our wills must be crucified that we may learn obedience to the will of God. This course of discipline includes persecutions, temptations, tribulations, afflictions, and disappointments. These we must endure, not stoically, but in humble, cheerful submission to the Divine will. So shall we be *glorified together* with Christ, when He cometh in His kingdom. What this means transcends our present conceptions.

18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Present sufferings often seem to us, while undergoing them, as very severe, almost insupportable; but in the apostle's estimation they, with all their severity, *are not worthy to be compared* with the future glory of God's people. Compared with the exceeding great reward, they are insignificant, not worth mentioning, momentary and trivial. How comforting and inspiring is this to the suffering saint!

> "Our conflicts here will soon be past,
> And you and I ascend at last,
> Triumphant with our Head."

It is not death that brings this revelation, but the appearing of the Great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ. We may as correctly translate revealed "to us" as "in us"; the preposition "eis" meaning primarily a motion "toward or into." "To us" is the better rendering here.

19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

This verse, and the two succeeding ones, are considered obscure by commentators. The obscurity is owing to the doubtful meaning and application of the Greek word (ktisis) here rendered by the English word "creature." The surmises as to the meaning of this word have been various. Some apply it to the Gentile world, others to the lower animals. These are only a few of the guesses on the subject. The trans-

lation is quite literal and proper. The only light shed upon the subject is in the context. From this I gather that the reference is to the human body, and particularly to the bodies of the saints. This explanation supposes the apostle to use a figure of speech called personification. Human bodies are represented as *waiting* in *earnest expectation* for something; that is, acting as intelligent beings. What our bodies are thus expecting is the *manifestation of the sons of God*. So it is really the bodies of believers only which are thus waiting expectantly, as they only will share in this manifestation. This manifestation of God's sons will take place at the resurrection of the just. As Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power by His rising from among the dead, so the sonship of God's people will be manifested in the same manner when they have part in the first resurrection, which is also a resurrection from among the dead.

20. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,

The *vanity* here spoken of to which *the creature*, the body, *was made subject*, is natural evil, sickness, pain, and death. But this subjection to vanity was not voluntary on its part; it was in no wise responsible for this curse. Nor are Adam's descendants responsible for these things, as they are the result of

Adam's sin, and not of the voluntary transgressions of his posterity. Hence it is said they were made subject to vanity, not willingly; but as this suffering for the sin of another would not be just if there were no recompense, it is said that they are *subjected in hope;* that is, there is the promise of a restoration to life again, and the hope is that of the resurrection. The last clause is a paraphrase, and not a literal rendering. We might read it thus: but by reason of the one having subjected *it* in hope. The God of infinite justice placed our bodies under the curse of physical death because He had provided for them a hope.

21. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

This then is the hope of the creature, deliverance from *the bondage of corruption.* The soul is here delivered from the bondage of sin but the body remains under the bondage of corruption until the resurrection of the just. This can apply only to the bodies of believers and those who are saved unconditionally, as infants and idiots. But it will embrace the larger part of the human race. It is not to be supposed that those whose souls have found no emancipation from the bondage of sin shall have bodies saved from the bondage of corruption. They shall have a resurrec-

tion, 'tis true, but to shame and contempt, instead of to liberty and glory. *The glorious liberty of the children of God* already exists, and into this liberty the body will immerge at its rising.

22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

The bodies of all men, saints and sinners, are under the curse of natural evil, and suffer with pain and anguish. This is, to a certain extent, true also of the lower animals, but there is no proof that their sufferings are in any degree the result of the curse, or that they have any hope of deliverance. The same Greek word (ktisis) is here translated "creation" that was rendered "creature" in the preceding verses. But it is qualified by an adjective extending its meaning. This would show that the bodies of saints were alone referred to in the former case.

23. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

This verse has tended to confuse the minds of expositors. If we *ourselves*, having *the first fruits of the Spirit*, are not included in the "creature," it is generally supposed that we must look outside of the company of believers to find the creature that is to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the

liberty of the children of God. What this "creature" is, that is outside of God's covenanted mercies, that is to partake of this glorious liberty has been hard to fix upon. But I consider that the whole difficulty is obviated and the enigma solved, by explaining that the "creature" in verses 19, 20 and 21 refers particularly to the *bodies* of saints; in verse 22, the "whole creation" refers to the bodies of all men, saints and sinners; that up to the present still suffer from natural evil; and that the 23rd verse, the one under consideration now, refers to the spiritual man, the soul, as distinguished from the physical man. The passage then means, that not only may our bodies be represented as groaning in pain and earnestly expecting deliverance from the bondage of corruption, but we ourselves, in our spiritual nature, though already enjoying the first fruits of the Spirit, liberty from sin, and the earnest of the heavenly inheritance, yet we are not content with this but *groan within ourselves not satisfied* until our bodies are redeemed. We have received the Spirit of adoption, and know that our spirits are adopted into the family of God, but we still wait for the adoption of our bodies also. Without redeemed bodies we are incomplete, not desiring simply to be unclothed by the dissolution of our bodies, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life.

24. For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

Hope can have respect only to what is in the future. It can therefore properly have nothing to do with the salvation of the soul, which is a present experience. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." It is therefore not a subject of hope. So far as the soul is concerned we are saved by faith, and enjoy a present salvation. It is with respect to the body that we are saved by hope, and this has been the subject under consideration. We hope for that as a subject of promise; a promise yet to be fulfilled.

25. But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The doctrine of the intercession of the Holy Spirit is here plainly taught, though this important doctrine is seldom mentioned in the scriptures, and nowhere else in such unmistakable language as in this place. In Eph. II–18th, we are told that through Christ we have "access by one Spirit unto the Father." Here the intercession of the Spirit is, no doubt, referred to. While therefore Christ is the only Mediator between God and man, He is not the only Intercessor. The Spirit also "itself maketh intercession for us."

While Jesus intercedes before the throne in heaven, the Spirit intercedes in our hearts. He creates in us these unutterable desires and longings which lead to prevailing prayer. Unless we have these intercessions of the Spirit we pray at random, not knowing *what we should pray for* as we *ought* to know, in order to prevail with God. But this *infirmity* of ignorance the Blessed Spirit *helpeth*, by teaching us what to pray for. The Spirit teaches us that though we earnestly desire the adoption, the redemption of our bodies, it is a blessing which we cannot now enjoy, but must *in patience wait* for it, and in patience suffer the results of natural evil, sickness, pain and death. We need not expect deliverance from these evils until our bodies are redeemed. We may find help in special cases, but we are still liable to all these sufferings and inconveniences until the Father shall adopt our bodies, ransoming them from the power of the grave. Sickness is not necessarily an occasion of shame to the child of God, as some teach. He has no promise of present exemption from disease. That will come after while.

27. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will* of God.

Though we are ignorant of the intentions of the Deity, yet the Blessed Spirit, the Heart-Searcher,

knoweth the mind of Divinity, and therefore he can inspire us with such desires as are in accordance with the will of God. So there can be no mistake when we pray under the inspiration and through the intercession of the Holy Spirit. Hence saints can pray with confidence that their prayers are heard and answered.

28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

This is a thought which is full of comfort to God's people; that even their severest trials and deepest afflictions are conspiring for their eternal welfare. Comment can add nothing to the clearness and force of this declaration. Because *those who love God* are here denominated *the called*, we are not to infer that none others are called; for we are told elsewhere that the many are called though but few are chosen. This verse and the one following are relied upon by the Predestinarians to prove their theories, but, I think, without warrant.

29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

30. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

That God has foreknown some as His people, and that such are predestined to eternal life, is certain.

And that such persons are called, justified, and glorified is also clearly taught in the scriptures. But that, as is taught by some, this predestination is without foresight of faith or good works, remains to be proven. God has predestined to eternal life every believer who continues faithful to the end of his trial. No doubt he also has foreknown all these. He knoweth the end from the beginning. But God's knowledge can have nothing whatever to do with the freedom of His creatures. Nor are we to conclude that none are called or justified but those who are finally glorified. Such a claim contradicts the plainest teachings of the scriptures. If the salvation of the soul depends entirely upon God's election, and God's election depends entirely upon God's will alone, without any reference to the character or conduct of the creature, then the whole scheme of redemption by Jesus Christ was superfluous and unnecessary. God can save men by His mere fiat alone. No such doctrine is taught here. Christ becomes *the first-born among many brethren*, when men become sons of God also. Jesus is the only begotten Son. Men are sons by adoption. It is true, saints are said to be begotten and born of God, but this is in a spiritual, not a natural, sense. Christ was literally begotten of the Holy Ghost, and so in the same sense he was the Son of God. Adam was

a Son of God, so called in scripture, but he was a son by creation and not begotten. Christ as a human being was literally the Son of God as well as the son of man, and this human nature united with the eternal Word is called the Son of God. The doctrine of the Eternal Sonship is, I think, not taught in the scriptures, and it has been a great stumbling-block to human reason. Christ, being the first-born, has preëminence among his brethren aside from his Divinity.

31. What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

It makes no difference who intends to be against us, if God be for us, He will turn their evil intentions to our profit. Even the malice of demons is made an occasion of good to us. The stars in their courses fight for us. Wicked men may curse us but God turns their curses into blessings. O happy people whose God the Lord is. No power in the universe can harm them, except that they may harm themselves.

32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

If God gave this greatest possible gift, His own Son, it is not reasonable to suppose that He would withhold the lesser things that we might need. We

need then have no fear of asking too much while we keep inside the promises. We honor God, and show our confidence in both His ability and magnanimity by asking great things of Him. If we are straitened in our prayers the cause is in ourselves, not in His promises.

33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.

34. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

We are told in the first verse of this chapter that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. This fact is reiterated here. Everything is in favor of them that love God. He defends them against their enemies, so that the wrath of man is made to praise Him and benefit them. He also maintains their cause against their accusers who would condemn them. Christ is their Advocate and Intercessor, and the Father, as Judge, decides in their favor; He justifies them, clears them of all fault and all blame. We are not to suppose that this is done through partiality or contrary to the truth, but according to the law and the facts. If God, our Judge, pronounces us clear, it is because the facts warrant such a decision.

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

This question is understood in two different senses by different expositors. The ambiguity is found in the phrase "the love of Christ." The obvious meaning is "Christ's love"; His love toward us. Some, however, understand it to mean our love for Christ. It does not matter much which way it is explained, as what is said here is true in either case, that nothing outside of ourselves can destroy either God's love toward us, or our love toward Him. As the sense does not require an exceptional meaning, we will give it the obvious one. It is objected that the evils here enumerated can have no influence on Christ's love for us, but may have upon our love for Him. True; but they tempt us to doubt His love for us. When we are under tribulation, persecution, nakedness, etc., we are strongly tempted to think that we are separated from God's love and Fatherly care; that He has forgotten us, or has become indifferent to our sufferings. Satan would fain persuade us of this. *Shall tribulation?* This word in the original signifies a crushing, compression, etc. Shall *distress?* The Greek word signifies straits, narrow places, etc. Shall *persecution?* The Greek word signifies a driving away, a chasing, pursuit, etc. Shall *famine?* In times of persecution they were likely to go hungry for lack of food. Shall *nakedness?* This does not mean without any clothing, but without sufficient

clothing, destitute, as they were liable to be when driven about by their persecutors. Shall *peril?* While hungry and naked, their lives were also in danger from the malice of their enemies. Shall *the sword?* And if the worst their persecutors could inflict, death, came to them, still this was no proof that the Lord had ceased to love them, nor could it quench their love to Him.

36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

This quotation is from Ps. XLIV–22nd verse, and is here applied to persecuted saints, and was literally fulfilled in some persecutions the earlier Christians suffered.

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

To be a conqueror, to overcome, is a great success; and to such, precious promises are made. But we are said to be *more than conquerors.* What can this mean? we may ask. The apostle was a citizen of the Roman Empire, and may have had in his mind some of the customs of that people. Among the Romans military success and military heroes were held in the highest esteem and honor. All successful military leaders were accorded great honor, the highest conferred by the state. But some military successes were more complete and overwhelming than others,

and to such victors still higher honors were paid. They were given what was called a triumph. This was done by a vote of the Roman Senate. In this case the triumphant general was allowed to make his entry into the city of Rome in a grand procession, at the head of which he rode in a triumphal chariot, followed by his victorious troops, and also by noted captives in chains and on foot, conquered monarchs sometimes suffering such humiliations. These were followed by the spoils taken in the war, as well as strange animals and other products of the conquered country, and prisoners of war, reduced to slavery. The honor of a triumph was the highest ambition of a Roman warrior. In such case he was recognized as more than a conqueror. In II Cor. II–14th, we read, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." This is no doubt the same thought expressed here in Romans.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is a repetition and extension of the thought in the 25th verse. It might be considered an answer to the questions therein asked. *Death* has no power to separate us from the love of God. If we are the

Lord's while we live, we shall certainly be the Lord's when we die. A good testimony in the dying hour is well; but often at such a time the intellect is clouded and consciousness intermittent or wholly suspended. The best and most convincing testimony to leave behind us, is the testimony of a holy life, spent in submission to the will of God. *Life* is more dangerous than death, with its trials and temptations, its snares and its pitfalls. The poet has well said,

> "O fear not thou to die,
> But rather fear to live; for life
> Hath thousand snares thy feet to try,
> By peril, pain and strife."

Yet this cannot separate us from the love of God while we are faithful to Him. *Angels, principalities, and powers*, here no doubt refers to Satan's forces. We are told in Eph. VI – 12th, that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers." The fallen angels are here referred to, commonly called devils or demons. Says Charles Wesley of them,

> "Angels our march oppose,
> Who still in strength excel;
> Our secret, sworn, eternal foes,
> Countless, invisible.
> From thrones of glory driven,
> By flaming vengeance hurled,
> They throng the air, and darken heaven,
> And rule this lower world."

But even these, with all their strength, guile and malice, cannot separate us from the love of God. Though they accuse us day and night as Satan accused Job, they will fail in their purpose. *Principalities* and *powers* may refer to human governments which became persecuting agents of Satan, symbolized by the great Red Dragon; him the saints overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. *Things present* are those difficulties and troubles which already beset us; *things to come* are those which wait for us in the future of our experience here on earth. These latter are apt to give us more concern than the former. We know not how severe and overwhelming these may prove to be, and we are tempted to doubt our strength to bear them. But we have the assurance that whatever they may be they shall not be insurmountable nor unbearable. *Nor height;* no exaltation of soul nor of fortune; *nor depth;* no depression of spirit nor desperation of condition, shall be able to separate us from the love of God. Exaltation might induce pride and self-confidence, depression might lead to the casting away of our confidence, and to despair of God's mercy. But grace will be sufficient in either case. *Nor any other creature;* nothing but our own choice can separate us from the love of God; all the remainder of creation is powerless to do this. The love of God, manifested

in the gift of His Son, Jesus the Christ, is above human comprehension; it "passeth knowledge." We can feel its force and yield to its blessed compulsion, but its infinite height and fathomless depth is beyond our finite grasp.

General Observations.

God's foreknowledge, and His predestination of believers to eternal life, are matters which in former times were subjects of warm, and sometimes bitter, controversy. That controversy seems at length to have ceased upon these points. God's foreknowledge is a stumbling-block to many, who cannot see how it can be consistent with human freedom. Yet the difficulty is only seeming and not real. I would lay it down as a universal proposition that the knowledge of no intelligent being concerning an act of another intelligent being can have any influence or effect upon that act. It makes no difference whether that knowledge exists before the act, after the act, or during its performance. It is easily seen that this is true concerning knowledge of an act during, or after, its performance; but it is imagined that previous knowledge of an act has a compelling effect. But no intelligent reason for this surmise can be given. The opinion is based upon the assumption that the act

will happen because it is foreknown; while the truth is, it is foreknown because it will occur. What has occurred in the past I may know because it has occurred. What is transpiring now I may know because it is happening. Why should it be different concerning future events? If God knows what will happen in the future, He knows it because it is going to happen; it is not going to happen because He foreknows it. Strictly speaking, there is no foreknowledge with God. He fills eternity, and all eternity is as much present with Him as the fugitive moment is with us. And His knowledge has no more effect upon the conduct of free agents than our knowledge has.

CHAPTER IX.

1. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

St. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and magnified his office; and in doing so he incurred the suspicion and enmity of his own people, the Jews. They accused him of being an apostate and an enemy of his nation. Because he would not allow the Jewish law to be imposed on the Gentile Christians, he was accounted an enemy of the law. It is, no doubt, for this reason that he feels it necessary to make such strong assertions of his love for his Jewish brethren. He feared they would not believe him sincere.

3. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

The apostle represents his sorrow for the obstinacy of his Jewish brethren to be so acute that he could wish to suffer in their stead if by this means they might be saved. He would be willing to do for them what Christ has done for us. He became a curse for

us, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." St. Paul does not say that he does this, as it is impossible; but that he could do it, so great is his grief. Moses felt similarly concerning Israel, and asked that he might be blotted out of God's book for their sakes. This love surpasses that which Christ concedes to natural men. He says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." To be willing to bear the wrath of God due to another, is a much greater manifestation of love. The Jews did not, however, give him credit for such affection.

4. Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises;

5. Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The apostle here, by way of conciliation, concedes to the Jews all that he can concede, for he is about to say some very unwelcome and distasteful things, which it will be hard for them to receive. In his care to avoid all unnecessary cause for offence, and in his willingness to give them credit for everything possible, he shows his sincere love for their souls, and sets an example for other ministers of Christ to imitate. *Israelites* were so called because descended from Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, whose name was changed at the time of his wrestling with the

angel of the Lord. It was said to him at that time, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob (supplanter), but Israel (prince of God)." *The adoption* refers to their having been chosen to be God's peculiar people. *Covenants* were made first with Abraham, and afterward with all Israel at Sinai. *The glory* of the old covenant was reflected in Moses' face, at the time of the promulgation of the law at Sinai. *The giving of the law* took place at the same time under circumstances of great impressiveness, and with manifestations very grand and terrifying. *The service of God* was carried on first in the tabernacle erected in the wilderness by God's command, and carried from place to place as the Israelites journeyed, and afterward in the temple built by Solomon, and then, after the restoration from Babylon, in the second temple, which stood at the time of Christ's advent. *The promises* which are fulfilled in Christ were given to the Jews, and the wrong interpretation of these promises had given the Jews a false security and a false hope. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, together with the twelve sons of Jacob, sometimes called the twelve patriarchs, are those referred to as *the fathers*. Of this stock Christ was born according to the flesh. In order to get rid of the force of the last clause of this 5th verse, our Unitarian friends would render it, Blessed be God forever. Amen. This rendering seems to be

a rather violent twisting of the original Greek to serve a purpose.

6. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

For want of proper consideration of the principles stated in these verses, much confusion and misunderstanding have resulted. The promises made to Israel are generally applied to all the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, while we are here informed that they apply to but a part of the natural seed. I refer to promises that are to be fulfilled under the present dispensation. Formerly, all of Abraham's children were excluded except Isaac. It is true that Isaac was the only legitimate child, being the son of Sarah, Abraham's wife, while his other children were children of concubines. But they were not necessarily excluded on this account, as Jacob's children, who were the children of concubines, inherited along with the children of Rachel and Leah. It was for some other cause that Ishmael and the other sons of concubinage were left out. The apostle uses this fact as a type of spiritual things. As Isaac who was a child of promise, and whose birth was supernatural, was

made heir to the exclusion of the purely natural children, so God's children under the gospel are all children of promise, and have a supernatural birth. All others, whether Jew or Gentile, are excluded from the covenant, and have no promise. Under the gospel, there is no promise to any man because of his natural descent, or for any fleshly reason. The common assumption, then, that there is a promise of salvation to all the Jews because they are Abraham's seed must be a mistake. *The children of promise* are the seed to whom all the promises are made.

9. For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

Sarah was ninety years old at the time the promise was made and had always been barren. There could be no natural prospect of motherhood in her case. It seemed so preposterous to her that when she heard the promise she laughed, as did Abraham when the promise was first given him. Hence the child was named Isaac, an anglicism of the Hebrew word meaning "laughter."

10. And not only *this;* but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac;

11. (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

The apostle's argument is that God acts as a sovereign in disposing of men in this world. As He chose the Jews in this way formerly, He had now the same right to reject them from being His peculiar people. This the Jews were unwilling to believe or acknowledge. God chose Isaac instead of Ishmael, Jacob instead of Esau, not because either was better than the other, but because the one chosen suited God's purpose better. But this choice, or election, had nothing to do with their eternal salvation as is sometimes imagined. It does not mean that everything Jacob did is to be approved, or Esau's conduct all condemned. It is true that Esau lacked the religious instinct or an appreciation of sacred things, and so is called a profane person, and was unsuited to God's plan; but he was a much more honest man than Jacob, frank and open, while Jacob was subtile and guileful, manifesting the tactics of the weaker. But he had the religious sense, a reverence for things sacred, which were necessary to God's purpose, and he was chosen to be the progenitor of the peculiar race. The prophecy that *the elder should serve the younger*, had respect to their posterity and not to Jacob and Esau, as Esau never served Jacob. On the contrary Jacob made submission to Esau on his return to Canaan from Mesopotamia, and called him "My lord Esau." But when Isaac was about to die,

he insisted on giving the blessing of the first-born to Jacob, not because Esau had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, nor because of Jacob's stratagem, but because God had chosen Jacob. All the latter's subterfuges and stratagems were unnecessary. God had not made it necessary for him to become a liar and a thief to obtain that which he had already designed for him. Esau could find no place of repentance, not in himself, for he repented bitterly enough, but in his father; he could not persuade his father to change his mind. Esau was *hated* in the sense that he was loved less, or that another was preferred to him. In the same sense in which we are commanded to hate father and mother. Jacob was loved in the sense that he was preferred for God's purpose. This love had nothing to do with his salvation, nor was God's hatred of Esau detrimental to his salvation any further than his love for Jacob was promotive of his salvation. Neither was affected in any way.

14. What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

That is, is it unjust in God to choose one rather than another as his special instrument, and thus to honor one above another? Does he do wrong to the one thus rejected? No; in these temporal affairs God acts as a Sovereign, giving no reason why. No one has any claim to the honor, and so is not injured,

nor deprived of any right when another is preferred to him. The object of these illustrations is to obviate the objection made by the Jew, that God cannot justly take church-membership from that people and give it to another people.

15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

God has an undeniable right to determine upon what conditions he will have mercy and compassion. These conditions are plainly stated in His word. But these conditions apply equally to all men. He does not have mercy on one man, and refuse to have mercy on another man except for the reason that one man complies with the conditions and the other does not. With respect to temporal matters it is different, as these do not determine men's eternal destiny, and there will be compensations for present inequalities. In the other case there cannot be such compensations. None of God's creatures are outside possible mercy except as a result of their own choice; for "His tender mercies are over all His works," and they "endure forever."

16. So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

The condition upon which God will grant His favor is not dictated by *him that willeth* nor by *him*

that runneth, but by God Himself who shows the mercy and grants the favor. No man has any right to dictate the terms upon which God shall grant him favor. But this does not mean that God arbitrarily saves one man and damns another simply because He chooses to do so, there being no difference in the objects of His mercy and His wrath. Such conduct on the part of a God of Infinite Love is inconceivable; and to extract such poison from the scripture under consideration is to "change the truth of God into a lie."

17. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

God *raised* up Pharaoh, that is, elevated him to the throne of Egypt that He might use him to make known His power, that the knowledge of the true God might be widely disseminated. He used Nebuchadnezzar in the same way, as also Darius the Mede. He saw that Pharaoh was stubborn, and headstrong, and would refuse to let the Israelites go at God's command. By resisting God, he gave occasion for such wonderful displays of God's power upon His enemies as were seen in the ten plagues of Egypt.

18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

He has mercy on those who submit to Him, and hardens those who resist Him. Resisting God naturally hardens the heart, and makes it still more difficult to yield to His demands. To charge that God arbitrarily hardened Pharaoh's heart and then punished him for his stubbornness, is a horrible slander upon the Divine character. Mr. Wesley, in his controversy with Mr. Toplady on the subject of predestination, illustrates this slander by instancing the case of the Roman Emperor, Tiberius, who wishing to take the life of a Roman family containing a young girl, knowing that the Roman law forbade the execution of a virgin, commanded the executioner first to deflower and then to kill her. But, says Mr. Wesley, "Even good Tiberius did not command her to be slain because she had been deflowered." If he had done this, it would have been just such conduct as is sometimes charged upon God Almighty.

19. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

The apostle here supposes some one, presumably a Jew, to cavil at what has been said. "If in these things God acts according to His own will, and we have nothing to say, it takes all responsibility off of us, since we have not thwarted His will. Why does He then find fault with us?" I have heard like objections made in an effort to throw off responsi-

bility. One will say, "I was not consulted as to my birth, and my surroundings, nor as to the character of my parents; nor could I avoid having a perverse nature and evil tempers. I am just as God made me, why should He find fault with me?" This is all true but it is only a part of the truth, and is a direct charge against God's ways, and His government of the world. It is a dishonest charge; for the objector knows that it is not a full and fair statement of the case. We cannot thus shift responsibility for our wrong-doing. But if all our conduct were the result of an irresistible decree of Deity, then the objection would be valid and reasonable.

20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?

21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?

The potter certainly has this power and the right also. So has God the right to make of the same human clay one man for an honorable position, another for one less honorable or by comparison, one of dishonor. But the potter's vessels are both useful though one may be found in the dining-room and the other in the chamber. But the potter does not make a useless vessel simply for the pleasure of destroying it. If he were guilty of such conduct he

would soon find himself in a lunatic asylum Yet God is charged with creating some men for the express purpose of destroying them "to the praise of His glorious justice." We are told in another place how we may become vessels unto honor in a spiritual sense; in temporal matters we have no choice. "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work." (II Tim. II. 20–21.)

22. *What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

God's manifestations of His displeasure at sin by inflicting temporal punishments is not only justice to the offenders, but a mercy to others, being a warning against like conduct in them. This is one of the principal objects of such punishments. Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the Canaanitish nations dispossessed by the Israelites, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, are all examples of God's wrath. They were *vessels of wrath fitted to destruction;* but they had by their ungodliness and shamelessness, and by their incorrigibility, fitted themselves for destruction;

God had not so fitted them although resistance to Him had hardened them. He *endured with much longsuffering* their detestable crimes against God and human nature itself, until there was left no hope of reformation. To teach that God by irresistible decree produced such conduct, and then claimed to endure His own work with longsuffering, is to attribute to Deity a duplicity that is astounding.

23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

While God shows severity toward incorrigible offenders that others might fear to transgress, the great purpose of His love toward mankind is to save them. He seizes upon the opportunity, as it were, which is afforded by man's lost condition, to make known the riches of His mercy. This display of mercy is, so far as we know, unique, and the angels are reputed to be curious concerning it. While God is glorified in the punishment of the wicked, in both this age and the next one, He is much more glorified in their salvation. These *vessels of mercy* were *prepared aforetime* in God's purpose to save them that believe.

24. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

These vessels of mercy were not the descendants of Jacob as distinguished from those of Esau, but

believers of both Jews and Gentiles as distinguished from unbelievers.

25. As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26. And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

These prophecies portend a change of dispensations and a change of churches. The new church is composed principally of those who *were not God's people*, that is of Gentiles. It is not exclusively a Gentile church, nor was the former church exclusively Jewish, there being proselytes from among the Gentiles incorporated in it. The two churches are here spoken of as two women, the first wife having been divorced for her unfaithfulness that the other might take her place. It is a common figure in both the Old and New Testaments to call the church God's wife or bride. If there is a new wife which *was not beloved*, and a new people which was not God's people, how can it be true, as is generally taught, that the Church of Christ is organically identical with the Mosaic church, with no change except of ordinances? This would not be a new wife which formerly was not beloved, but the same wife as of old with but a change of raiment.

27. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the num-

ber of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

28. For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

These scriptures are quoted to show that the rejection of a large part of the Jewish nation had been foretold, though they had failed to notice or to understand the prophecies. Like other men they were much more sure to note God's promises than His threatenings. And while they were quick to appropriate the promises to themselves, they were slow to believe any threatened evil could be meant for them. They were unwilling to look squarely at the truth revealed in the scriptures which they so highly venerated.

30. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

Since this change of dispensations has been clearly foretold, and also the rejection of the Jewish nation as the Church of God, and the admission of the Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews, as well as the refusal of the mass of the Israelites to accept of God's terms, what is to be said? This is to be said: that the Gentiles who cared nothing for God's

favor and made no effort after justification have attained to justification, because they sought it by faith.

31. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The Jews, seeking justification by the works of the law failed to find it. The doctrine of Justification by Faith without Works seemed to them an insuperable obstacle. They could not divest themselves of the idea of meriting something; and were unwilling to become spiritual paupers. Salvation by Faith is a *stumblingstone* not to the Jews alone, but to proud, self-confident humanity in all nations. Though much talked and written about it is yet little understood, and most men still, consciously or unconsciously, trust in themselves that they are righteous. The majority of nominal Christians have drifted toward or into Socinianism, while most of the remainder have taken refuge in barren Antinomianism. The former trust in dead works, the latter in a dead faith. Real believers are "delivered from dead works to serve the living God"; having a faith which is the fruitful source of universal obedience to the law of love.

General Observations.

The apostle has in this chapter laid the foundation of an argument, continued in the next two chapters, in which he undertakes to prove that the rejection of a large part of the Jewish nation is no infraction of God's promise to Israel. He shows that Israel does not necessarily include all the natural seed of Abraham, since all of Abraham's children except Isaac are left out of the covenant, and that Esau, the eldest son of Isaac, though Jacob's twin brother, is also rejected. He shows, secondly, that none of the natural descendants of Abraham are, by virtue of that relation, the seed to whom the promises were made, since it is written, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called"; which he explains to mean that all the real Israel is composed of those who, like Isaac, are children of promise, that is, children of faith. He shows further that the prophets Hosea and Isaiah have foretold an ecclesiastical change in which a new element is to be incorporated into God's church, and that it is intimated that but a small remnant of Jews shall be included among the people of the New Covenant. He shows, finally, that their rejection is their own fault, because of their stubborn adherence to a system of works by which they sought justifica-

tion. He also demonstrates that God cannot be charged with injustice in honoring one person rather than another, since no one has any claim upon the place of honor, and is not, consequently, injured when discriminated against, as these differences are but temporary, and do not determine the future destiny of any one.

CHAPTER X.

1. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

The word "Israel" is here used in its literal sense to signify the whole Jewish people. The apostle earnestly desired their salvation, and prayed to God for this; not that they might all be saved, for he knew this to be impossible, but that as many as possible of them might be saved. As he did not know what individual Jews would yield to the Gospel, he might pray for any one of them, and in that sense might pray for all of them. In this sense we may pray for all men, though absolutely certain that not all will be saved.

2. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Zeal for God is an excellent thing and will atone for many mistakes. Without it all service is a hardship and likely to be done grudgingly. But blind zeal is likely to do more harm than good. Nearly all the innocent blood that has been shed in religious persecutions has been shed under the stimulus of mis-

directed zeal for God. Such a zeal Charles Wesley describes:

> "The spirit of my foes I caught,
> Their angry bitter zeal;
> And fierce for my own party fought,
> And breathed the fire of hell."

Some one accused John Wesley of not distinguishing between zeal and wrath. He replied, "Yes I do. Wrath is furious fire from hell; zeal is loving fire from heaven." This is true zeal, but something else is often mistaken for it. But even this zeal must be directed by knowledge or it will often miss the mark. It is right that we should run and also fight; but we are not to run uncertainly nor fight as one beating the air. It is intimated in scripture that a man may really build on the one true foundation, and yet lose all his labor, because he has built of perishable materials, dead works that will not stand the test. Not many real Christians probably make so deplorable a mistake; but the great mass of professed Christians build of no other materials. Like the Jews, their zeal for God is not according to knowledge.

3. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Their ignorance was concerning God's plan of justifying men; and not knowing God's plan they

sought to establish their own plan, which was by the works of the law; and of course while engaged in such endeavors they failed to submit to God's plan of justification, as it is the exact opposite of theirs. To seek in any degree to be justified by works, whether of the Jewish law or of any other law, is to discard God's plan entirely.

4. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

This is a fundamental principle of Christianity. To seek justification through Christ, is to disclaim all merit, to abandon law of any kind as a condition of God's favor. To trust in any act of our own, any ordinance or rite to which we can submit, any self-denial or mortification which we can undergo, to trust in the least any or all of these or any like things, is to deny Christ and to reject God's plan of justification. Christ is the end of all doing in order to obtain righteousness or justification. This is the force and meaning of the above declaration.

5. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

This is the nature and condition of legal righteousness. It is approval earned by obedience to law. The reward is not reckoned of grace but of debt. Faith is not necessary in such a scheme, but works

only. But as no man is able to keep any law that could give life, we must be saved, if saved at all, upon some other condition, namely, by grace through faith, instead of by merit through works of obedience.

6. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above:*)

7. Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach;

The above quotation is from Deut. XXX, 12–14, and is the language of Moses to the Israelites concerning the law which had just been repeated to them. Its application by the apostle to the gospel is quite unexpected, and if uninspired men were to thus apply scripture it would be considered a strained use of it. This should convince us that there is much more of spiritual meaning in the Old Testament scriptures than is usually imagined. The quotation is evidently made from the Septuagint version, as the English translation from the Hebrew renders it "over the sea" instead of "into the deep," which would spoil the apostle's explanation, that it referred to bringing Christ up from the dead. The meaning of the question is that we cannot excuse our neglect or rejection of salvation, by declaring that the con-

ditions are unreasonable or impossible; as they are *nigh* us, perfectly adapted to our conditions and necessities.

9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Believing *with the heart* is a very different thing from mere intellectual assent. The latter is produced by evidence without any concurrence of the will, the former is the result of choice and volition. In this sense I may or may not believe, as I choose. It is a faith that is a matter of choice, that saves, not one that is a matter of necessity. This salvation must be confessed in order to be retained. A salvation which is concealed from others is impossible.

11. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

This seems to refer to the matter of confession spoken of in the preceding sentence. Those who really believe in Christ find Him precious and faithful and they are so filled with love for Him that they are not ashamed to confess Him as their Lord and Savior. Shamefacedness before men suggests strong doubt of the genuineness of our experience.

12. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The Jew no longer occupies a position of advantage. All difference between him and the Gentile has disappeared. Jehovah is *the same Lord over all.* There is no promise made to the Jew that does not equally apply to the Gentile. All stand upon the same footing, every one without distinction being saved if he *calls upon the name of the Lord* for salvation. This disproves the theory that the Jews have some special promises, and that some special means will be used for their conversion. There is no real foundation in scripture for this popular hypothesis.

14. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15. And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Men will not call upon God unless they believe in His existence, and His willingness to help them. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." And they cannot believe in Him until they hear of Him. This necessitates a herald or preacher, that men may hear of Christ and His salvation. But in order that they may preach, they must be sent. The apostle sees as great a difficulty in this,

as in the other things mentioned. When he asks, "How can they hear without a preacher?" he means to state emphatically that they cannot hear without a preacher. And when he asks, "How can they preach, except they be sent?" he means to assert that they cannot preach unless sent. But by whom sent? By men? by the church? Some people think this is the meaning, as they reject the doctrine of a Divine call to the ministry. The apostles preached without any commission from man, and seem to have been rather successful preachers. The lack of a human commission does not therefore seem to be an insuperable obstacle to success. The apostle must therefore have referred to a Divine commission. How shall men preach the gospel except they be sent of God? If you seek an answer to this question look around you. You will see on all sides the results of such preaching. Only those who are sent of God can so preach as to secure the salvation from sin of those that hear them. Those who are sent of God are His accredited ambassadors, and represent Him among men. The others run without being sent and are of no value.

16. But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

The fact that not all the Jews had believed the gospel, was apparent; indeed comparatively few of them had done so. But this was only what had

been foretold of them by their own prophets. This quotation from Isaiah indicates that to the prophets' eye the preaching of the gospel had been a failure so far as the Jews were concerned. But a small remnant of them really accepted Christ.

17. So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Hearing is the appointed and usual means of producing faith; but it is not the exclusive means, as reading is sometimes substituted for it. But we have no right to depend upon any but the God appointed means, which is the most effective and powerful agency for the salvation of men. A decadent and powerless pulpit is a sure sign of apostasy. Hearing comes *by the word of God.* Faith cometh by hearing the gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation. There are various kinds of preaching that do not produce faith when heard. Men may preach philosophy, ethics, sociology, the doctrine of men, moral reforms, and produce no faith in the hearers. The simple story of the cross antiquated as it may seem to many, "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," "Jesus and the resurrection," these are the themes that produce faith.

18. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Just how far the apostles of our Lord succeeded in fulfilling the commission they received from Him, to go into all the world and preach the gospel, it is difficult now to ascertain with certainty, though St. Paul in Col. I–23rd, declares that the gospel "was preached to every creature under heaven." But probably his language is not to be understood precisely and literally. We are dependent upon tradition for much of our testimony on this point. But it is probable that every known country of the habitable earth had already received the gospel before the close of the first century. Some countries of Asia, and some in the Northern parts of Europe were "terræ incognitæ" to the Greeks and Romans. Among these we may probably include China and Japan. There is no evidence, so far as I know, that these countries were visited by any of the apostles or other evangelists. Of course the Western continent was totally unknown. But those countries in which the Jews were found were all visited and as the order was "to the Jew first," they could not plead ignorance.

19. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you.

St. Peter writes, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who

hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but *are* now the people of God." (I Peter, II, 9, 10.) This passage seems to identify the *people which are no people* with the church of Jesus Christ. They are also the *foolish nation;* not foolish in reality, but in the estimation of other men. There is no Gentile nation to which this could in any sense apply. It was through the Christians that St. Paul hoped to provoke his Jewish brethren and so perchance save some of them. It is true that the church of Christ is composed principally of Gentiles; but it is as Christians and not as Gentiles that they are the people of God.

20. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

This clearly refers to the Gentiles, and is a prophecy of their call to church-membership. The boldness of the prophet consists in his so plainly setting forth the call of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews.

21. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

This is a serious charge and abundantly justified by the facts. It is when men are unwilling to obey, that they begin to question what they hear, thus be-

coming gainsayers. The Jews never were an obedient people; as Stephen charges, they always resisted the Holy Ghost. They had no real faith as a nation, but they had a fanatical presumption that they were in the favor of God. They believed themselves to be so peculiarly dear to Jehovah that they would be protected from all harm, obedient or disobedient. They would not believe that His partiality for them could ever fail, and they rejected with scorn a religion that Gentiles could share with them on equal terms. Even when the Roman armies surrounded the walls of their doomed city, this fanaticism did not fail them; and they remained defiant, regardless of all reasonable means of defence. They were guilty of that presumption which they charged upon the Lord Jesus. "He trusted in God that He would deliver him" said they; "now let Him deliver him seeing that He delighted in him." But even the awful disasters and disappointments attending the fall of Jerusalem did not subdue their obstinacy. They still remained obdurate and unyielding.

CHAPTER XI.

1. I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

This question has a double meaning, and receives a double answer. 1st, Has God cast away His ancient people, the Jews? Has He entirely rejected them so that they have no opportunity for church privileges? Has He now taken the Gentiles to the exclusion of the Jews, as He formerly took the Jews to the exclusion of the Gentiles? "Certainly not," answers the apostle, "as a proof of which I am an example." The Jews as a nation were no longer the people of God; but as individuals, they had equal privileges with the Gentiles. They were not irrevocably cast away.

2. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3. Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

Here we have the answer to the second meaning of the question, Hath God cast away his people?

His people whom He forcknew have not been cast away, nor has His attitude toward them changed in any way. The apostle here makes a distinction between the natural seed of Abraham, and God's people whom He foreknew.

On this distinction hinges the interpretation of the remainder of this chapter. The Jews claimed that if they were cast off, God's promises to His people would fail. This the apostle denies, and claims that these unfulfilled promises were not made to the natural seed of Abraham, but that the children of the promise were counted for the seed, and that these included both Jew and Gentile.

4. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal.

5. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Even in the time of Elijah the Israelites had so far apostatized by adolatrous practices as to make void all God's promises to them; and so general was this apostasy that Elijah supposed himself the only faithful one left in Israel. Yet there was a remnant of several thousand left. Even so it was at the time the apostle wrote. But this remnant was according to the election of grace; that is, through their acceptance of the gospel. As in the time of Elijah, the remnant were all who had any promise, so the

Jews who had accepted Christianity were the only ones in that nation who had any promise. The others, having rejected Christ, were threatened with destruction, according to the prophecy of Moses, that God should raise up a prophet like unto himself, and that every one who would not hear this prophet should be destroyed.

6. And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

This has been already explained. Grace presupposes the absence of all debt or merit; works presuppose nothing else. Consequently, in the nature of things, they mutually exclude each other. This plain proposition is however not much more clearly understood by nominal Christians than it was by the Jews.

7. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

The facts show, and the prophecies prove these facts to have been predicted, that the natural Israel has failed to obtain that which they sought after, namely, the favor of God; but the remnant according to the election of grace have obtained it. By "the election" is meant those chosen or selected out, because of their acceptance of the gospel. Those who resisted the gospel, became blinded as a result

of their obstinacy. They refused to walk in the light until it ceased to shine for them. This is judicial blindness, but it is not arbitrarily imposed upon men, but results from their own misconduct.

8. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

9. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them:

10. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

This state of darkness and slumber not only continued until the time of the writing of this epistle, but continues up to the present day. The quotation in the 9th and 10th verses is from the LXIXth Psalm, and is from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint version, because it was made by seventy Jews of Alexandria some time before the Christian era. The New Testament writers always quote from this version. Our translation of the Old Testament is from the original Hebrew, and often varies considerably from the Septuagint. Psalm LXIX, 22, 23 reads: "Let their table become a snare before them; and *that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.* Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake." There is nothing said about their table becoming a stumblingblock and a recom-

pense. No doubt this was in the Hebrew scriptures when the Greek translation was made. It is sometimes, probably usually, explained, that *their table* which is to be made a stumblingblock, is to be understood to mean their temporal blessings, such as food and raiment, etc. Just how these temporal blessings are to become a snare or a stumblingblock, I do not clearly understand, and that meaning seems to me to be weak and inadequate. It is true that the word "table" might properly stand for temporal good, but is that the meaning here intended? Seeking a more spiritual meaning, it might be thought that the law given at Sinai might be referred to; it is sometimes spoken of as "tables." But it is always in the plural number; and besides the proper Greek word for the tables of the law is not here used. That word is "plakes," while the word here used is "trapeza." The former means "a flat surface, a tablet," while the latter means "a table, or the viands on a table, a bench, a counter, etc." It is said to be derived from "tetrapeza," "having four feet or legs"; so a literal table, or by a figure of speech, the viands on the table, must be meant. Now Christ is said to be our passover, our bread, and so our meat and drink. Gospel salvation is often represented under the figure of a feast, a great supper. It is also called the water of life and salvation.

Christ and the provisions of His gospel are then our table, and when we come to Him we are said to come to the Lord's table. Ours is a spiritual table, but not so that of the Jews. Their religion stood in meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances. And was it intended for their welfare? It certainly was. It was intended that these fleshly symbols should lead their minds up to spiritual conceptions, and prepare them for the reception of a spiritual religion. But in the case of most of the Jews it failed of its purpose.

> "They rested in the outward law,
> Nor knew its deep design."

Did the ceremonial law become a *snare and a trap and a stumblingblock?* Most assuredly it did. They learned to trust in works of obedience, and believed them to merit God's favor, and so could not be brought to accept the humbling doctrines of the cross, and of salvation by grace. But not only did a system of carnal ordinances prove a snare and a stumblingblock to the Jews, but having been through ignorance or design superimposed upon Christianity, they have proven a snare and a stumblingblock to Christians also. And in each case they have become a recompense; they are all of religion they have left. They do these things for the sake of doing them, and that

is the end of the matter; they have, and will have, no other reward. *Their eyes are* also *darkened that they may not see*, and *their back is always bowed down* to carry this load which St. Peter declares is more than their fathers could bear.

11. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

That is, Is their fall irrevocable? Not at all. They have still the same opportunity as others have of mercy and favor. But the very thing that occasioned their stumbling, salvation by grace, free for all, made salvation accessible to the Gentiles, which may serve to provoke them to jealousy. We are not to suppose that if the Jews had generally accepted the gospel, that the Gentiles would have been excluded from its provisions; nor that the Jews must fall to make room for the Gentiles; salvation would have been extended to the Gentiles whether the Jews had fallen or not fallen. The apostolic commission shows that, as well as does the express design of Christ's coming.

12. Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

The apostle speaks in hyperbole here; literally, their fall could enrich no one. It can be of no advantage to any one that another person is lost. But

the thing that he stumbled at and fell over may be of great advantage to another person. And that is the meaning here. The doctrines of grace that the Jew stumbled at are of inestimable value to the Gentile, and to every human being, Jew or Gentile. And it would be still better if the Jew could be persuaded to accept those doctrines and be saved.

13. For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.

14. If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them.

In all his writings the apostle Paul shows his sincere desire for the salvation of his kindred by avoiding as far as possible every occasion of offense to them, and by softening these truths so severe and shocking to their sensibilities. Though he was not sent to them, but to the Gentiles, yet he constantly shows his solicitude for their salvation.

15. For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be* but life from the dead?

It was necessary that their former relation to God should be repudiated in order that there should be a reconciling of the world, that of twain one new man might be made, so making peace.

16. For if the firstfruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and

with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

18. Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in.

20. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

21. For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

The figure of the olive tree and its branches is often used to prove the identity of the Abrahamic Church with the Church of Christ. But I am convinced that this is an unwarranted use of the parable. It is claimed that the two institutions are the same with only a change of ordinances. This position is untenable, and the passage under consideration will not assist in the defence of it. The emblematic olive tree can represent neither the Abrahamic Church nor the Church of Christ. For 1st, the natural branches are said to have been broken off from this olive tree because of unbelief. Now this cannot apply to the Abrahamic Church, because faith was never a condition of membership in that church; at no time did more than a small remnant of them have faith, yet the unbelieving ones were equally members of it. Then 2nd, these unbelieving Jews were not severed from the Abrahamic Church. It may be true that the tree which would represent that church, died,

but its branches died with it. 3rd. It cannot represent the Church of Christ, as those unbelieving Jews were not broken off from it, as they were never in it. If then the figurative olive tree can represent neither of these churches, how can it prove their identity?

22. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again.

The olive tree from which they had been broken off, and into which they could again be grafted, and into which the Gentiles had been grafted, represents not any special organism, but the privilege of being related to God as His people or Church. The Jews by unbelief lost this privilege, they did not lose membership in the organism with which they were connected. The Gentiles by faith obtained this privilege which they held by faith, and were liable to lose. This privilege the Jews could again obtain by repentance and faith, as their fall was not necessarily final.

24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be graffed into their own olive tree?

The wild olive tree represents no organism as the Gentiles were not organized, but it should if the tame olive tree stood for one. The wild olive tree repre-

sents the uncultivated, uncared for condition of the Gentiles in contrast with the state of discipline and culture of the Jews. The Gentiles were grafted contrary to nature, in that naturally we graft good stock upon bad, and here bad is grafted upon good. In nature it is the tree we would improve, here it is the graft. In nature the graft retains its own qualities and is not changed by the nature of the stock upon which it is grafted; here the graft is changed into the nature of the tree. This is all therefore contrary to nature. The Jews were the natural branches because they had always enjoyed the privilege of filial relation to God, though in an outward sense only. So to be reckoned among God's people was their natural condition.

25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

By a *mystery* is meant a fact or doctrine which has not been clearly revealed, but has remained concealed or covered. The fact of the final apostasy of a large part of the Jewish nation is one of these partially concealed truths. The *part* of the Israelites to whom *blindness has happened* is the large majority of the nation. *The fulness of the Gentiles* signifies the whole number of them who will be saved. This is not a

large proportion of them either. The notion that the whole world is to be converted is unscriptural and contradicted by the plainest statements of Holy Writ.

That this blindness of the Jewish people is ever to be removed during the Christian age, is not here stated and cannot be logically inferred. It is but a surmise at best, and can make no demands upon our credulity. If it takes place at all it must be in the next age, and we have reason to believe that when the Lord Jesus leaves Heaven and comes to earth His Mediatorship ceases, and that the number of His elect is complete.

26. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

27. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

I unhesitatingly affirm that the above statement is generally misunderstood. It is commonly supposed to foretell the conversion and restoration of the Jewish nation. The statement embodies a conclusion drawn from the preceding argument. But what is the previous argument? It is in reply to an objection supposed to be urged by the Jews, that if they, or a large part of them, are rejected that God's promise to His people will fail. It is urged in reply that the promise was not made to all the seed of Abraham, but was confined to Isaac alone. So they could not

claim it as being of the seed of Abraham. Nor could they claim the promise as the descendants of Jacob or Israel, for "they are not all Israel who are of Israel." That is, none but "the children of promise were counted for the seed"; or as the apostle says in another place, "they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." He quotes from the prophets to show how the facts of history and the predictions of seers coincide with this view of the case. And then he is supposed to draw his conclusion by ignoring and overthrowing his argument, and by declaring that, after all, all the natural seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob shall eventually be saved. If so, why did he not say so in the first place and save time and labor? That would have answered the objector at once. Such a conclusion may satisfy some persons, but I am not yet ready to write down the apostle as a dunce. I am fully convinced that St. Paul knew what he was writing about, and was able to draw a logical conclusion. And what would be a logical conclusion from the arguments above recited? It would be that although the natural Jews are generally though not universally rejected, yet the promise of God will not fail; that the Israel to whom the promise was made will be saved; that this is spiritual Israel composed of both Jew and Gentile, the children of the promise who

are counted for the seed. And this is the conclusion here drawn, without a doubt. *All Israel shall be saved*, without an exception; the promise shall not fail in one instance, not in one individual case. If the statement is applied to the natural seed of Abraham it is far from being true. Taken in its obvious sense it would mean the salvation of every literal Jew. But it may be objected that the expression "all Israel" is to be understood in a sense not so literal; that the Jews will be saved generally though not universally. But if this were admitted even then it would not meet the case. A small remnant was saved in the beginning; a smaller remnant has been saved since. Probably the whole number in nearly two thousand years would not amount to one generation of the Jews. But there have been nearly sixty generations of Jews since this epistle was written. If the Deliverer were to come and save the present generation without exception, the saved Jews would amount to but a small fraction of the whole number. If natural Israel is meant, it must include all who now live, all who have lived, and all who shall live, or the promise fails. With the most liberal interpretation it must include a large majority of all these. But this is contrary to all known facts; therefore it is a false interpretation. To spiritual Israel the declaration applies perfectly;

it fits the case and therefore it is obviously the meaning of the passage. The *Deliverer* here spoken of is, no doubt, the Lord Jesus. The quotation is from Isaiah LIX and reads in our version, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn away from transgression in Jacob." The apostle quotes from the Septuagint. The difference is not material. There is nothing to show that any other appearing is referred to than the one already made. The covenant also is the New Covenant, in which it is said, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The *Jacob* here mentioned is, no doubt, spiritual Israel. This covenant is an everlasting one and includes both Jew and Gentile believers, and it is never to be superseded by any other one. In it there is no promise of the salvation of either all the Jews or of all the Gentiles, but of all believers only.

28. As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes.

They, that is, the Jews in general, were enemies of the gospel because the Gentiles were admitted to covenant relation with God on the same terms with themselves. *The election*, or the elect remnant, *were beloved for the fathers' sakes*. The Lord showed the Jews special consideration in the preaching of the

gospel, a consideration which they did not always deserve. In the proclamation of the gospel they were made the first offer of salvation. This was meant as a special favor to them who should believe, and so they are said to be beloved for the fathers' sakes, as it was because of their faithful ancestors, and not because of any deserving in them that these special favors were shown. If the Lord showed special favor to the degenerate offspring of the Jewish patriarchs, who were of faith, is it presumption to believe that God will deal with equal favor with the children of faithful parents now? The sin of the parents falls upon the third and fourth generation of their posterity; will not His mercy extend even farther?

29. For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

That is, God does not change His mind concerning His gifts nor callings; nor has He changed His mind concerning the case under consideration; but He is calling and bestowing spiritual blessings upon those whom He originally intended as the beneficiaries. The disappointed ones have simply misunderstood Him.

30. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31. Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

Though the apostle is addressing Gentile Christians, his statements are intended for the benefit of the Jews, and he puts their case in the most favorable light, that he may placate them and if possible save some of them. His language might appear to make the salvation of the Jews of more importance than that of the Gentiles. As the apostle to the Gentiles, St. Paul seems to think that he may more safely appear to undervalue them than another could do. Others might seem to do it from prejudice, but he cannot be thus suspected. Thus he *magnifies* his office. But in reality, as the apostle declares in another place, between Jew and Gentile "there is no difference; for the same God over all is rich unto all that call upon Him."

32. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

There can be no mercy extended to men who can merit favor. It is the sinner, one who comes short of what is expected of him, that needs mercy. So long as the Jews justified themselves they felt no need of mercy. The destruction of their false trust and their false hope was an absolutely essential preliminary to their salvation.

33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35. Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36. For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.

The contemplation of the glorious truths of the gospel filled the mind of the apostle with wonder and praise. So will they affect our minds, when we apprehend them.

General Observations.

The opinion that the scriptures teach the final conversion and restoration of the Jews is quite prevalent, if not almost universal. It is easy to see how the prophecies of the Old Testament may be thus misunderstood and misapplied. But there is nothing in the New Testament that can be supposed to teach this opinion, unless it be the last three chapters which we have been considering. I think that I have conclusively shown that they do not so teach. I object to this theory for several reasons. First, it makes God appear partial toward one nation as though it was better or more deserving than the others. The Jews were repeatedly informed that they were not chosen by God for His peculiar People because of any such superiority. The reasons for

God's dealings with the Jews are often overlooked or misunderstood. Some of these reasons I will mention here. There was great danger, and in fact a practical certainty, that the whole world, after the flood, would relapse into idolatry and paganism, and thus a knowledge of the true God would be entirely lost. There was also a promise of a coming Messiah that would also be forgotten. In order that a knowledge of Jehovah might be preserved, and that an expectancy of a Redeemer might be fostered; and in order that a depository for Divine revelation might be provided, and that a people might be prepared for the reception of the Savior of mankind; it was necessary that a people should be selected for these purposes, and put under special and stringent regulations, to keep them separate from the other nations. To this end they must be impressed with the idea that they were peculiarly holy, and that association with the heathen was defiling. Wonderful manifestations of Divine power on their behalf must be manifested from time to time, to keep alive their religious zeal, and to confirm them in the belief that they were God's peculiar charge. They must be made as unlike other people as possible. All this was done, not for their sakes alone, but for the good of all nations. God saw in the seed of Shem peculiar religious susceptibilities, and from among

them Abram was chosen as best fitted for God's purposes. Abram, or as he was renamed, Abraham was an exceptional character, the most perfect, probably, in the history of the Old Testament; but few of his descendants inherited his peculiar virtues, but they inherited those qualities needed for God's purpose. It is true that the discipline to which the Jews were subjected, and the misunderstanding on their part of its purpose, had bad effect upon their character. They became proud and arrogant, contemptuous of others, and full of self-importance and self-righteousness. But this was unavoidable in fallen human nature. And notwithstanding the heroic treatment given them it was with difficulty that the desired end was secured. Out of eleven tribes and two half tribes, but three tribes, or at least a large part of three, were left at Christ's advent; the other ten having sunk into idolatry, and having been rejected as unfit for God's purpose, long before the coming of the Messiah, were scattered among the nations and entirely lost. It is probable that the address in The General Epistle of James, to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, referred to Spiritual Israel. It is the same as that of Peter, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, etc. This calling of the posterity of Abraham was not because of any partiality to them, but for the general good; and when God's pur-

pose was accomplished they sank back again into the general mass; in Christ Jesus every distinction vanishes. The distinction was temporary and to a great extent vicarious; now the Lord knows no difference between Jew and Gentile.

Secondly. My second objection to the theory of the final restoration of the Jews, as Jews, is that it is a retrogression, a going backward, rather than a going forward. Christ came to break down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and to make of twain one new man, so making peace. The restoration of the Jews as a nation would be a rebuilding of that middle wall, and an emphasizing of differences that Christ came to destroy. Christ spoke of bringing in other sheep not of the Jewish fold, that there might be one fold, one shepherd; this would be making two folds again, with but one shepherd. St. Paul declares that if he builded again the things which he had destroyed, he would make himself a transgressor. Yet this theory would represent Christ as coming to destroy things and then to build them again.

Thirdly. My third objection to this theory is that it is opposed to the whole genius and spirit of Christianity. It is generally thought that the Jews will be gathered together and their temple service re-established. To what end? These things that

could be shaken were long ago destroyed, that the things only that cannot be shaken, those which are eternal, may remain. I have not so learned Christ. Such transactions would be puerile, mere child's play. Christianity leads men up from the material and the symbolical to the spiritual and real, to the eternal, but it does not lead them back again. As well might we suppose that the University graduate would be put back into the primer when beginning a post-graduate course. The idea is absurd and fantastical. What a low view of Christianity do such teachings indicate! They are revolting to a spiritual mind. For these reasons I must reject the theory commonly taught, as unscriptural and unreasonable.

CHAPTER XII.

1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

Here begins the application of the principles contained in the former chapters of this epistle, and exhortations to practical godliness. It is not a conclusion from the preceding chapter so much as from the whole of the epistle, so far written. It is *by the mercies of God* that the brethren are exhorted to obedience. Fear is never appealed to as a motive to Christian obedience. Christians possess a love that casts out fear. It is by a sense of God's mercy and goodness to us that we are moved to give ourselves without reserve to Him. A sense of God's magnanimity makes us ashamed of our selfishness. Since Christ has given Himself for us, we are constrained to abandon ourselves to Him. A sense of His mighty love makes us ashamed of self-seeking, and we long to show our appreciation of it by a full surrender of ourselves to Him. It is God's goodness that moves us, not His wrath.

We are exhorted to *present* our *bodies a living sacrifice*. This living sacrifice is contrasted with the sacrifices under the law, which were all dead. A sacrifice is something devoted to God. We are then to devote our bodies to God's service and glory. Our members are to be "instruments of righteousness unto holiness." We are to carry out in our conduct, and in our speech, the principle of holiness. The idea that our bodies serve the devil, while our spirits serve the Lord, is unscriptural and unreasonable. Our bodies are declared to be holy, the temples of the Holy Spirit, and not "sinful flesh" as some would represent them. All this is declared to be our *reasonable service*. And who can show otherwise? Since we are not our own, but bought with a price, it is most reasonable that all our ransomed powers should be devoted to the service of our Redeemer. There is nothing more reasonable to a rational mind than the requirements of Christ's religion. They appear unreasonable to those only who misunderstand them. Men have taught many unreasonable things in the name of Christ, but He is not responsible for them.

There are some who think they see in this verse an exhortation to a "second work," or a higher state of grace. I see no evidence of such a thing, and I am persuaded that no such thought was in the writer's mind.

2. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The *world* to which we are not to *be conformed*, is the present order, or system of things, now on the earth. This system is in rebellion against God, and we cannot be in conformity with it, or even with its friends, without becoming God's enemies. The boundaries of worldly conformity are not generally understood or recognized. The term includes much more than is generally supposed. (See my sermon on The Love of the World in "Christian Citizenship and other sermons.") The child of God is unlike the world in his spirit, his motives, his desires, his purposes, and consequently in his conduct. He has different affections and different affinities. He is as unlike worldly men as he can well be and remain human. But worldly conformity is unavoidable unless we become *transformed by the renewing of* our *mind*. It is in vain that we adopt some peculiar garb, some eccentricity in the cut or color of our dress, or some oddity of speech; without this heavenly renewing we remain of the world in spite of all works. This renewing is the work of the Holy Spirit, and by it we are transformed into heavenly-minded men and women; our affinities and affiliations are with those persons and things which are above. Such transformed persons ardently sing,

"Earthly joys no longer please us;
Here we would renounce them all;
Find our only rest in Jesus,
Him our Lord and Master call.
Faith our languid spirits cheering,
Points to brighter worlds above;
Bids us long for His appearing—
Bids us triumph in His love."

Being thus transformed we are enabled to prove by a blest experience what is *the will of God* concerning us; *the good*, *the acceptable*, *the perfect*, will of God. He will "fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." Without this renewal we will prove only our own evil, foolish, and preverse will. The apostle, no doubt, uses words advisedly. To *prove the perfect will* of God, must mean fully to measure up to God's ideal. This, men under the law, could not do, and provision had to be made for the flesh, an allowance for failure, a failure which was inevitable. Many things were thus allowed because of the hardness of their hearts. Not so now; no provision is to be made for the flesh, but we may find an answer to the prayer that God's will may be done by us on earth as it is done in heaven.

3. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

There are few things that have a greater tendency to produce disorder and confusion in a congregation than a failure to observe this caution. It is very salutary as applied in a general sense, against holding too high an opinion of ourselves, but salvation which produces humility counteracts this propensity. The apostle here refers particularly to the danger of mistaking our office in the body of Christ, the Church. We are liable to imagine ourselves called to a higher work than is really assigned to us in God's plan. This will breed envy, debate, and confusion; for there can be no harmony in the labors and efforts of the body under such conditions. In order that we may not make any mistake in this matter we must use the right measure on ourselves. If we estimate ourselves from a natural standpoint of our supposed intellectual abilities, or of our relative importance in the community, we will probably get into error. We must use the measure which God will provide, here called *the measure of faith*. The word "metron" here rendered "measure" signifies a rule or measure by, or with, which to measure things. When God deals to us this measure He with it gives mental sobriety that enables us to see things as they are in His sight, in their proper proportions; and thus will we be enabled to find our proper places in the Church.

4. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5. So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

The representation of the Church of Christ under the figure of a human body is common in the New Testament epistles, and it is a very instructive emblem. As in the body the members have different offices, so it is in the Church; and it is important that each member should perform its proper function. By so doing it contributes to the growth and usefulness of the body. Otherwise it becomes a hindrance and an excrescence. The members are mutually dependent upon one another. Our translators have violated the rules of syntax in their rendering of the last clause of the fifth verse.

6. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

God places the members in the spiritual body of Christ as it pleaseth Him, and He divides the differing gifts to the members for the mutual benefit of all. This fact was once recognized, but is now generally disregarded by the various sects. Offices are filled by majority vote instead of Divine appointment. The gift of *prophecy*, while sometimes meaning the foretelling of future events, is generally synonymous with preaching. To preach is, properly speaking,

to proclaim or announce. "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." To proclaim the news of salvation provided for lost men, and to announce the conditions upon which that salvation may be obtained is the principal work of the gospel preacher. His message then is mostly to the unconverted. His office is therefore properly mentioned first.

7. Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

The Greek word (diakonian) here rendered "ministry" signifies "ministry, service, a waiting upon, etc.," and is the word from which the English word "deacon" is derived. But the first deacons were appointed to look after temporal things, and it is probable that the apostle here refers to ministry in spiritual things, as the context shows. It seems to me that it refers to the administering of spiritual comfort and consolation. Joseph was surnamed Barnabas, the son of consolation, because of his gift in this direction. The preaching brings men into distress because of their sins, and then the minister is needed to advise and comfort. This is not the whole of his work as God's people often need his ministrations. *Teaching* is another office and gift. Jesus, after commanding His apostles to preach to, and disciple the nations, says, "Teaching them to observe

all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This gift has been almost extinct in the nominal church for a century past at least. There have been many preachers and ministers but few teachers. The result has been that while many have been brought to a profession of Christianity, and have received the consolations of the gospel, they have usually stopped there and of consequence have soon lost what they had already gained. The teaching gift is of first importance in order that the church may be built up in holiness. The teaching gift has been undervalued until it has been lost, and the nominal church has continually lost ground in spirituality until preaching itself is less and less esteemed, and is in many instances but a minor part of religious service and worship.

8. Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The office of exhorter is generally considered to be of less importance than the others here mentioned. Indeed most denominations ignore it altogether; the Methodists and kindred sects recognize it as a distinct office, but it is generally not clearly defined. The exhorter is not supposed to confine himself to any special subject, but is allowed much latitude in his addresses. But a rambling discourse without theme

or connection is not an exhortation. The exhorter has a distinct work to perform. His function is not to instruct, but to urge men to action; to stir them up, to excite their zeal, and to encourage them to do their best. This is a work of much importance and the gift is a very useful one.

The pastor of a church is generally supposed to fill all these offices; but while some men may have all these gifts, this is not, and has not been, usually the case; and without the Holy Spirit we can have none of them.

It is to be expected that there will always be opportunity for *him that giveth*, as we are always to have the poor with us, in spite of the efforts being made by enthusiasts to abolish poverty. But in order that giving may be more blessed than receiving it must be done in the right manner. This requisite is *simplicity*. This signifies singleness, and refers to the motive in giving. This motive must be single or it is evil, as an eye that is not single, Jesus declares to be an evil eye. If I give simply for the glory of God in benefiting the recipient, well and good. But if I have any selfish or ulterior motive in giving I lose my reward and do an evil thing. What then must be said of those religionists who encourage men to give through pride and vainglory, and who make direct appeals to the selfish and ungodly propensities

of human nature? Will the end sanctify the means, think you?

The government of the Church of Christ is a theocracy; Christ is the Head of the Church, possessing all authority, a measure of which He delegates to those whom He chooses and appoints as shepherds or pastors of His flock. These derive their authority direct from Christ and are responsible to Him alone. Believers are the sole judges of any man's call to be a shepherd; they are to accept him only so far as they recognize the Chief Shepherd speaking through him; a stranger they must not follow. This may appear to worldly wisdom as the absence of all order, but it is the Divine order. As a rule, every man is a shepherd over his own spiritual children, not building on another man's foundation. There is no system, probably, more adverse to spiritual growth among Christians, than an itinerant pastorate. While it is well calculated greatly to increase the number of converts, it is a failure otherwise. Mr. Wesley never made a greater mistake than when he originated that system. It is the duty of him *that ruleth* to watch over the souls of those in his charge as one that must give an account. He is to "look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." If he be careless and indolent the blood of souls will be found in his skirts. He is emphatically his brother's keeper. The

writings of the apostle Paul give us a vivid conception of the cares and anxieties, the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, of a shepherd of souls. How impressive are such statements as these: "Now do I live if ye stand fast in the Lord: Who is offended and I burn not?" "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, ye have not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel:" "For we are glad when we are weak and ye are strong." These quotations show the intense interest taken by a true shepherd of souls in the welfare of his flock.

To *shew mercy* grudgingly or sourly robs it of its pleasure, and makes it an injury to the recipient. Shakspere has well written, "The quality of mercy is not strained." We are not to assume a cheerfulness we do not feel, but we are to feel cheerful in showing mercy. There is nothing more in harmony with Christian character than to show mercy, as a Christian is by nature a merciful man, because he feels his own need of mercy.

9. *Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

With saints there must be no pretenses; everything must be genuine. With men in general a show of good-will is quite common, while no such feeling exists. In fact, in the condition in which men are

found naturally, human society would be impossible upon a basis of absolute sincerity. Social amenities require hypocrisy and deceit. But this is not true among genuine Christians. Their hearts being emptied of hatred and malice, and filled with love and good-will toward all, there is no need of pretense on their part. Flattery and the affectation of solicitude and affection, so pleasing to fallen human nature, are to them abominations which they will not practice. Real love does not end with words, but is seen in the conduct. Where it exists, the ideal of the poet is realized:

> "Friendship sweet and dear esteem
> In every action glow."

The first influences of the Holy Spirit produce in our hearts an abhorrence of evil. Any supposed work of grace that is not accompanied by abhorrence of sin is a sham and a delusion.

This is naturally followed by a desire after that which is good. In the true Christian, this state of abhorrence of evil, and of cleaving unto that which is good becomes a fixed one.

10. *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;

The relation of brethren and sisters in Christ is the most sacred one known to mankind. It is also

the most intimate and perfect. The natural relations of blood and kindred are temporary; this relation is to be everlasting. Jesus said, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? He that doeth the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my mother and sister and brother." If this is true of Him, it is true also of all those whom He acknowledges as brethren. How strong and tender is that relation that will continue forever! Unlike the natural relations, it is free from all taint of fleshly desire or selfish interest. It is not dependent upon natural affinity or mutual attractiveness. Natural affection is the result of instinct and environment; this love is heavenly and Divine. Upon its continuance depends the existence of the Church of Christ; if *brotherly love* fails, all is lost.

To *prefer each other in honor* is easy to those who esteem others more than themselves. This is the inevitable result of real brotherly love. It removes the danger of envy and jealousy, and promotes harmony and unity.

11. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Although salvation destroys those motives which usually prompt to industry and thrift, it does not encourage indolence or shiftlessness. It substitutes the desire to please God for a desire to get gain.

I certainly should be as diligent in serving God as in serving myself. Strictly speaking, the believer does not work for a livelihood, but trusts God for that. He works because it is the will of God that he should do so.

The notion that labor is necessarily detrimental to piety or zeal in God's service has no warrant in God's word. In the same connection in which diligence in business is enjoined, *fervency in spirit* in God's service is also commanded. The apostle did not know nor suppose that one prevented the other. The mendicant friars of the Roman church have not generally been examples of holy zeal. We may be both diligent in temporal affairs and fervent in spiritual concerns; and we are not likely to be more fervent spiritually as a result of idleness, or slackness in temporal things.

12. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

We are told of our Lord that it was because of the joy that was set before Him that he endured the cross despising the shame. It is hope that maketh us not ashamed. It is good for us often to dwell upon the joy set before us, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Such rejoicing makes it more easy for us to be *patient* in *tribulation*. Tribulations we will have; they are among the things promised

us; by means of them we learn patient obedience to God's will.

The Greek word here rendered "continuing instant in," signifies "persisting in, persevering in, being constantly engaged in," and means either that we should hold on to the practice of praying to the end of life, or that we should persevere in our petitions until we obtain an answer; or it may mean both. But I think it means that we should insist on an answer to our prayers; that we should pray and not faint. If we are drawn out in prayer for anything and do not receive an immediate answer, it is not because God is not ready to bestow the blessing, but because we do not sufficiently feel our need, and are therefore not enough in earnest. Herein is the need of instant or persevering prayer. It is not needed to move God, but to move us. Most prayers are made without expectation of an answer, but simply as a religious performance. This is not praying, in the proper sense, but saying prayers as the heathen do, thinking we may be heard for our much speaking.

13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

It is the bounden duty of the church to take care of its own poor. This duty does not give us a dispensation from the other duty of doing good to all men, but it is especially our duty to take care of poor

saints. The proportion of those who need assistance is much smaller than it was nineteen hundred years ago. There are few cases of real necessity among those who love and serve God, and it is the imperative duty of their brethren to look after their welfare. A church that allows any of its members to become dependent upon the cold charity of the world has denied the faith and is worse than infidel. The professed Church of Christ that would do such a thing would permit the Lord Jesus Himself to die in an almshouse. The love that will not divide the last dollar with a brother in need, is not the love that is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

Hospitality in ancient times, when inns and hostelries were infrequent, was a much more obvious duty and virtue than now. But we are not excused from the exercise of hospitality, and especially toward brethren. Love prompts to this duty, and we are encouraged in its practice by being told that some anciently entertained angels unawares, who supposed themselves to be sheltering men only. A hospitable spirit certainly becomes a Christian, who confesses himself to be a stranger and a pilgrim.

14. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

It seems here to be assumed or taken for granted that Christians will be persecuted, and we know that persecutions are among the things promised those who

forsake all to follow Christ. John Wesley says upon this point, "But the persecution that attends *all* the children of God is that our Lord describes in the following words 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you (shall persecute by reviling you), and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.' This cannot fail; it is the very badge of our discipleship; it is one of the seals of our calling; it is a sure portion entailed upon all the children of God; if we have it not, we are bastards and not sons." (Wesley's Works, Vol. I, page 207.) The Christian's attitude toward his persecutors is that of the Lord Jesus toward His. It is not enough that he does not curse them, he must bless them; not in word only but from his heart. This is impossible to unsanctified human nature, and possible to those only who have the mind of Christ.

15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

While it is true that in a general way Christians are pleased at the success and prosperity of others, and are grieved at their losses and afflictions, yet there are many occasions of rejoicing to worldly people in which they cannot join and with which they can have no sympathy. It is with their brethren that they are to rejoice and weep, as they can and ought always to be in sympathy with them; since when one mem-

ber of the body suffers all suffer with it, and when one is honored all rejoice with it. Such is the unity of God's people.

16. *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

It is not enough that Christians should be of one spirit; it is also important that they should be of one mind, that they should see things alike, so that they may act in unison in the work of the Lord. In the present age this is generally given up as an impossibility. But it is not impossible among really spiritual men. When real saints mind the things that make for peace, the things that edify, they may avoid all differences and literally obey the injunction of the apostle. But to professors of the Christian religion in general this command can no more be kept than any of the others.

The next paragraph is translated by Mr. Wesley in his "Notes on the New Testament," "Mind not high things but condescend to low things." The noun is understood, not expressed, in the original. It is, probably, "high men" and "low men" or "high things" and "low things." The thought probably includes both. The verb rendered "condescend" signifies, literally, "to be carried, or dragged, away together with." Some suppose this to

refer to the imprisonment of God's people. I would render it, "Mind not high things, but be in agreement with common things." Common things are good enough for pilgrims and sojourners. Christians have renounced the vain pomp and glory of this world. They can have no desire for things grand or fine. They do not wish to live in palaces or to surround themselves with costly works of art. They are a plain people and ordinary things become them. To be exalted above their fellows in material comforts and luxuries would be to them a shame and a disgrace.

To be *wise in our own conceits* is a plain proof of folly. Solomon declares that, "The fool is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason." This is a very unlovely trait of character, and it is encouraged by ignorance. Love is the only known cure for this folly; it is not puffed up. It takes the conceit out of us and gives us humble views of ourselves and our attainments. The rebuffs and humiliations which the self-conceited endure will not cure them, and these experiences only prove the truth of another saying of Solomon, "Though thou bray a fool in a mortar, among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him."

17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

To *recompense evil for evil* is natural to all men; to render good for evil, to love our enemies, is possible to those only who have been made partakers of the Divine nature. By so doing we show ourselves to be the children of our Father in heaven.

Honesty in temporal affairs is but a heathen virtue, at best, and it is not to be supposed that a Christian would come short of it. To be remiss in these matters is plain proof of the absence of saving grace, though strict honesty and integrity may be practiced without salvation. Christians should avoid debt so far as practicable, and especially the "taking up of goods without the probability of paying for them." If love prompts our conduct we will not go far wrong in these matters.

18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

The child of God is a lover of peace, and quarrelling and contention are foreign to his nature. But as the apostle intimates, it is not always possible for him to live in peace. When he is for peace his enemies are for war. We may not always be able to get along quietly with "unreasonable and wicked men." But if there be trouble of this kind we must be sure that it is not our fault; the hindrance to peace must not *lie in us*. We have much reason to hope for the fulfilment of the scripture, "If a man's ways

please the Lord, He will cause even his enemies to be at peace with him."

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

This injunction is plain and easy to be understood. Some of the reasons for it are also quite obvious. It is not because vengeance is wrong in itself, or contrary to love, that it is forbidden us, since God hath declared, "I will repay." One reason, no doubt, why God has reserved vengeance to Himself is that it would be dangerous to us to take it. In our imperfect state it would be difficult for us to take vengeance without producing in us ill-will, and tempers contrary to love. Besides we are not competent judges in the matter, as to time, extent, etc. So God claims vengeance as belonging to His prerogative, and we are usurpers when we presume to claim the right to take it. Then again we have not the power to requite others as they deserve, if we had the right. Hence to preserve order, and to prevent confusion in the moral universe, God Himself will attend to the matter of inflicting punishment, and will thus insure the execution of strict and impartial justice.

On the contrary, we are to *give place to* wrath; not our own wrath, but to that of our adversary. We are to yield to the wrath we cannot mitigate

with a soft answer, and give it room by getting away from it. To do this, takes great moral courage, as it has the appearance of cowardice; but the right to run is one secured to us. "If they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another." We wrestle not against flesh and blood. But we are commanded to give no place to the devil, but to resist him steadfast in the faith.

20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

The requirement to love our enemies is peculiar to Christianity. To the Jew it was said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." But Christ commands, "Love your enemies." To do this is a proof of our sonship, as none but the sons of God are able to do so. But if we lack this distinguishing mark of God's children, how much better are we than the publicans, or common sinners? Nor must we perform these outward acts of ministry simply because they are commanded, but from a principle of love; a love that spontaneously flows from the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. We will feel no desire to heap coals of fire on the heads of our enemies, though this may be the result of our conduct toward them. If this should be our motive it would probably fail of producing the desired result.

21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Without the grace of God, evil will overcome us. The attempt is being constantly made. The resistance to evil is a large part of Christian warfare. We are assaulted from every quarter, and have need of all our armor. But we need not be vanquished. If we are *overcome of evil* it is our own fault. God's grace is sufficient to make us to stand, if we avail ourselves of it. The prevailing notion that we must yield to evil, and thus sin against God, is wholly unscriptural.

On the contrary, we may *overcome evil;* but we are not to do it with carnal weapons. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." We cannot "do evil that good may come." We must *overcome evil with good.* Goodness is our only weapon against evil. It is God's weapon. By means of goodness, God endeavors to subdue rebellious hearts. If this means fails, none can succeed. The man who is proof against the goodness of God is incorrigible, and his condition is hopeless.

General Observations.

The twelfth chapter of Romans contains more injunctions to practical godliness than any other chapter in the epistolary scriptures. In this respect

it resembles the Sermon on the Mount. Distinction is often made between doctrinal and practical preaching, or, to speak more precisely, dogmatic and practical preaching, and one is often recommended as preferable to the other. Doctrine, or dogma, is often thought to be dry and uninteresting, and is sometimes supposed to be unprofitable. But there is no need that Christian doctrine should be uninteresting. It is true that metaphysical speculations about doctrine are dry to the average man, but that is not doctrine. A large part of the epistles is doctrinal as distinguished from practical, and the practical is based upon the doctrinal. This chapter begins with "therefore," and consists consequently of conclusions drawn from what precedes it. Practice must be based upon doctrine. The more clearly the doctrines are presented, the more plainly will the practical duties appear. What is called practical preaching is often made offensive by a scolding spirit. This is wrong, and foolish also, as it fails of the desired end. God's children do not need scolding, though they need plain dealing; and unsaved people, though bearing the Christian name, cannot be scolded unto holy living. In such cases there is always something more or less that is personal entering into the preacher's motives, which vitiates all his efforts to do good.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

The duty of Christians to be subject to the present existing civil governments is here plainly set forth. In fact, the duty of subjection is the only one that is enjoined upon them toward these governments; they owe them nothing further. And even this requirement has its limitations. The apostles laid down the principle that our duty to God was paramount to our duty to man. When, therefore, human authorities require us to disobey God, and we must choose between the two powers, we must obey the paramount authority, and patiently take the consequences. The statement that *the powers that be are ordained of God*, has not the full force that is usually ascribed to it. The fact that God instituted civil government among men is undeniable; but that He authorizes existing governments remains to be proven. I understand the scriptures to teach otherwise; that these governments exist because men will not recognize the rightful ruler, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is

because they say, "we will not have this man to rule over us," that these governments are needed. But since they will not have Christ's rule, they must have some other authority to preserve order in the earth. But, objects some one, "Are not these governments ordained of God?" The Greek word "*tetagmenai*" here rendered "ordained," is from a verb signifying to arrange, station, set in order, etc. It is a military term from which our English word "tactics" is derived. The apostle simply asserts that human governments are arranged or set in order by God. God overrules in the governments of the world. Consequently, whatever governments exist, do so by His permission, and are according to His order or plan. He "guides the whirlwind and directs the storm," though He does not originate them.

2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

We are to understand from this that as God overrules in the governments of the world, we are to accept the present arrangement in human affairs as God's order or plan, and to submit to it without complaint. Governments may be oppressive or tyrannous, but Christians are forbidden to resist them, but are required to accept them as God's will toward

them. To resist or oppose existing governments is to resist the order of God, and will involve men in condemnation. We may refuse obedience to demands requiring disobedience to God, but must meekly accept the results of such disobedience. But no Christian can innocently engage in any insurrection or rebellion against any form of government however oppressive it may be. It is not the Christian's business to reform human governments, but to submit to them. That form of Christianity, therefore, which encourages men in rebellion or insurrection against any goverment must be a false religion. The government of the Roman Empire, under the Cæsars was tyrannical and oppressive. Some of those emperors were monsters of cruelty and lust, yet it was to this tyranny to which the apostle forbids resistance. If it was unlawful to resist a Tiberius or a Nero, whom would it be lawful to resist? It may be asked how human governments are to be improved under such conditions. They never will be improved, and it is not in God's plan that they should be. They are to prove a complete and disastrous failure.

3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

The general intention of government is to restrain and punish evildoers; those who are law-abiding

have nothing to fear. But it is impossible that any law made by man should bear equally upon all those subject to it, and it may prove oppressive where there is no such intention. Laws which are for the general good may prove to be great evils in individual instances. But in general, if we do good, we need not fear the laws.

4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

This was written of those pagan emperors who despised God and His religion. That they were God's ministers in any sense that would make Him responsible for their conduct it is perposterous to assert. Imagine the imperial fiddler as God's representative while Rome was burning, and the bodies of His people were being utilized as torches. Yet Nero was God's minister in the same sense as is any king or potentate who calls himself Christian. They reign not "by the grace of God," but simply by His permission. Nor is an elected ruler any more God's representative than one who rules by hereditary right. He represents only those who placed him in power. They are all His ministers, just the same as storms, earthquakes, and pestilences are. God uses them to accomplish His purposes as He did Pharaoh and

Nebuchadnezzar. He makes use of governments that are in rebellion against Him to preserve a semblance of order in the world, and to restrain and punish evildoers, and to protect those who do well.

5. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

If any kind of order is to be maintained on the earth, God must either use these hostile powers, or must destroy them and substitute His own government.

As He does not see fit as yet to make this change, His people must submit to His plan, and yield obedience to these hostile governments; not simply because they must and because they are afraid of the punishments threatened in the statutes, but for conscience toward God. Their obedience should be voluntary and cheerful.

6. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

The emphasis which the apostle puts upon this matter would indicate that there were some persons in Rome who were inclined to refuse to pay tribute. The word here rendered "tribute" signifies "something to be borne as a burden"; and it was imposed by the Romans upon the nations which they conquered. In Matt. XXII–17, where the question is asked concerning the lawfulness of paying tribute, a

different Greek word is used, which signifies a poll-tax, and refers, probably, to the universal poll-tax imposed by Augustus. The most religious Jews were opposed to the payment of this tax, and there may have been some converted Jews who still had scruples upon this point. The language of the apostle is, therefore, most explicit, and they are taught to regard the matter as God's will toward them. As God permitted these subject nations to be conquered, He permitted them to be taxed for the benefit of the conquerors, and the tax-gatherers represented His will toward the vanquished peoples; and to resist them, was to resist the Divine order.

7. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due;* custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

It matters nothing what the form of government may be, nor whether it is benign or oppressive, these duties remain the same. The child of God will pay all taxes and imposts honestly and cheerfully, trusting that his Father will supply the means for so doing. The burdens may seem heavy, but God wills that he should bear them. The character of the magistrate may not command respect, but the Christian pays honor to the office just the same. The court may not deal out equal and exact justice to all alike, but he obeys their writs, and so far as he can with

a good conscience, he does what is required of him. It is superfluous to say that no Christian will conceal his property from the assessor or the customs officer, nor will he endeavor to have his property undervalued. He will let covetous men have a monopoly of such conduct.

The notion that it is wrong for a Christian to recognize any rank or title of honor is not countenanced here. If George Fox instead of the apostle Paul had been making a defence before Festus, the Roman magistrate, he would not have felt at liberty to call him "Most noble Festus." He would have called him "friend Festus." Good men sometimes have extreme or fanatical opinions.

8. Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

We have in the first clause of this verse, in the original, a double negative intended to express emphasis. We would read literally, "Owe no one nothing, if not to love one another." This double negative is not allowable in English syntax. The propriety and desirability of being out of debt is easily obvious. But this is not really a prohibition of all debt, but only of debt contrary to love. The word rendered "owe" signifies to be under obligation of any kind, and it is manifestly impossible that we should live among our fellow-men and be under no

kind of obligation to any of them. But we are required to put ourselves under no kind of obligation that is contrary to the love of our neighbor.

9. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

The fact that *love is the fulfilling of the law* is of great importance, and one not generally recognized nor understood. Love does not fulfil the letter of the law, but the righteousness of it, as we are told in chapter VIII–4. It is true that the letter of the law must be fulfilled also, and Jesus declared that not one jot or tittle should pass from the law until all was fulfilled. This Jesus himself did, and became the end of the law to all believers. We are placed under a new commandment, the law of love. This law, according to promise, is written on our hearts, when the love of God is shed abroad there by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and we thus become partakers of the Divine nature. We are no longer judged by outward conduct, but by our inward motives. If all our conduct springs from love to God and man, we fulfil all the law, notwithstanding a thousand mistakes and shortcomings. If our conduct does not spring from love

it is offensive to God, however virtuous it may appear.

11. And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

We have no time for slumber, for inaction, for indifference; for our deliverance by death, or by the coming of the Lord, is nearer each day we live; and this consideration should stimulate our zeal and keep us wide awake. Even in those early days of this age, believers were looking for the speedy coming of the Lord Jesus, to rescue and reward them.

12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

The night of trial, affliction, and tribulation *is far spent*, *the day* of deliverance, of triumph, of final reward, *is at hand*. Hence, let us *cast off* everything that belongs to the darkness of this world, its friendship, its lusts, its maxims, its spirit, and *let us put on the armor of light*, righteousness, truth, faith, hope, and love.

13. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

These were the sins most common among the pagans of that time, and as human nature has not changed nor improved, they are also common among

those called Christians. *Rioting and drunkenness* are more common among the poorer classes; *chambering and wantonness* among the leisure classes; and strife and envying among all classes, and between the different classes.

14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

To *put on the Lord Jesus Christ* is different from having Him formed within us. We cannot put Him on unless He is within, however. To put Him on, is to imitate Him in our conduct; to walk as He also walked; to imitate or follow Him. This is our plain duty, and if we do not thus follow Him we are not His disciples.

The injunction to *make not provision for the flesh*, is almost universally ignored by professed Christians. By "the flesh" is meant the carnal nature; and to make provision for it is to allow that it shall have any control over our lives. God has made provision to destroy it, hence we need make no provision for its existence nor its influence over us. We are made free from it in Christ. Yet in the prayers written in the various litanies used by different sects, the fact is recognized that the users of those prayers would continue to fulfil the lusts of the flesh by sinning against God. Thus provision is made for the flesh contrary to the command of God. If their member-

ship were to obey the apostolic injunction here recorded they could have no further use for these prayers. So by making provision for the flesh men are encouraged to live in unholiness and disobedience to God.

General Observations.

Since love is the fulfilling of the law, it follows that outward acts, rites, and observances are of less importance than is generally supposed. In fact they are of no importance except as evidence of love or of its absence. This one consideration should put a stop forever to the wrangle concerning carnal ordinances, since they can be of no importance in themselves, and are only acts of obedience when they are the fruits of love. It is improbable that the law written in the heart, the only law promised under the gospel, would ever prompt its possessor to the observance of a carnal ordinance. He must be impelled to this act by some other influence. This law of love emancipates the believer from bondage to the letter, a bondage which is most hurtful to a weak conscience. As the observance of carnal rites cannot justify us, neither will the mere neglect of them condemn us Men however honest never have agreed as to the proper observance of these outward ordinances,

and probably they never will agree. If therefore the believer's acceptance with God or his future salvation depends upon his proper observance of any or all of these rites, he can never possess assurance of God's favor, as he can never absolutely know that he has properly observed them. This leaves him in a precarious state. But the law of love, the law of liberty, delivers him from bondage to fear and doubt, since "if any man love God, the same is known of him"; and if he knows that he loves God and his neighbor, he knows that he has fulfilled the whole law and not one jot or tittle of the letter stands against him. Thus he serves God "in the newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

CHAPTER XIV.

1. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

To be *weak in the faith*, is to be wavering, not yet established. Such a one is not to be rejected from fellowship on this account, but his weaknesses are to be borne with patiently.

The words rendered "*doubtful disputations*" (diakriseis dialogismon) are variously translated by critics. The first means a separation, a discerning, discrimation, a judging, a dispute, etc. The second signifies a discoursing together, a reasoning, a disputation, etc. The words are both nouns and the idea of doubt is not found in the original. I would render it "judging disputations," and I think the context carries out this meaning. The apostle has just shown in the preceding chapter that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that consequently these outward things are of small importance, and not worth contending about. And such contention would be especially injurious to those who are weak. It would distract their minds from the most important matters

and tend to stumble them by making them uncharitable. No doubt the differences of education and the prejudices growing out of these differences made it difficult for the Jew and Gentile converts to agree upon the meat and drink question and there was need of much forbearance and charity to prevent division. To judge and condemn one another over these trifles would be destructive of Christian charity, and particularly would this be true of the weak and wavering who could bear but little. They would need to be borne with rather than argued with. It is natural that men should be greatly concerned with meats and drinks, but better things are to be expected of spiritual men.

2. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

On the face of it, this is not complimentary to vegetarians, but their scruples are usually hygienic rather than religious. It was probably the Gentile converts who believed that they might eat all things, though some Jews may have been so fully instructed as to have understood their Christian liberty in these matters. The Gentiles had no distinction of clean and unclean meats, and so had no prejudices to overcome on this point. The Jew, on the contrary, had this distinction deeply impressed upon his mind and it was difficult for him to ignore it. Besides he could

not as a Jew use those meats that were clean to him unless the animal had been properly slain in accordance with Jewish custom. Where the Jewish population was scattered among the Gentiles it was probably difficult or impossible for him to procure the flesh of clean animals so prepared. Besides much of it had been offered in sacrifice to idols which had made it unfit for his use. So not being sufficiently instructed in Christianity to feel free to use his liberty, he abstained entirely from the use of meat.

3. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

This is precisely what they were respectively in danger of doing. The man who never had such scruples would be tempted to feel contempt for the man who possessed them, as they would seem to him to be foolish. And the man who once had felt such scruples, but was now delivered from them, though more able to bear with his weak brother, would still be tempted to undervalue him because of these things. It would seem to him that the other ought to have learned better.

On the other hand the man who did not eat meat would be inclined to condemn the man who did, for doing something which he could not do with a clear conscience, thus making his conscience, instead of the

teachings of the gospel, the standard of judgment. Indeed he would have much excuse for so doing. All the scripture then extant, would bear him out in so doing, and he could quote the letter against his brother. But one thing would cause him to hesitate; the fact that *God received him;* that God was evidently pleased with him. He could not pronounce him common whom God had cleansed.

4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

As the offence of judging is the matter especially under consideration, the apostle directs his admonitions to those who are in danger of committing this offence. The apostle does not here reprehend all kinds of judgment. In another place he expressly commands us to judge them that are within, and to put away from among ourselves any wicked person. He forbids us even to eat with such as show themselves to be transgressors while claiming to be Christians. The first thing to determine is whether a man is God's servant or not. If he is recognized as a servant of God then he must be left free in respect to these indifferent things which have really no moral quality. Such are all outward rites and ordinances, meats and drinks, holy days, etc. In these indifferent things every man must be left to

his own judgment and conscience. Not that one man may not have truth which the other man lacks. No doubt this is true. One may be right and the other wrong; but error in these matters is not vital. Our condemnation will not harm the other man but ourselves; since God will sustain him.

5. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Here also we see the effects of hereditary prejudices. The Jew was taught to esteem the seventh day as holy time, as well as some feast days. The Gentile had no prejudice in favor of the seventh, or any other fixed day; and when he became a convert to Christianity, he esteemed all his time alike holy. If the popular notion of the peculiar sanctity of one day in the week, either of the first or of the seventh, is correct, how can the apostle treat the matter as he does? Would it not have been his duty to have insisted upon the sanctity of one day in the week? But he does not do this, but treats the subject as a matter of conscience only, as are all indifferent matters. Some suppose that he refers to feast days only and not at all to the Sabbath day. But there is no proof of this. In another place (Col. II–16) the Sabbath is classed with feast days and meats and drinks. Evidently St. Paul does not consider any

day peculiarly holy to a Christian, else he must have insisted upon its observance. The Jew esteems one day holy above another as do Christians with Jewish prejudices; properly taught Christians regard all their time holy time, none of it more so than the remainder. But this is not a vital matter, so let every man follow his own convictions.

6. He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

As all these things belong among the things indifferent, and as each one does as he does with a pure intention, to please God, he is accepted of God. Certainly one man is right and the other wrong in his opinion; but those who are more fully instructed must bear with weaker brethren until they get more light and not despise them nor dispute with them. It is better to be right than in error even in things of small importance, but the Lord will teach His children and guide them into all truth.

7. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

It is of Christians the apostle is speaking when he asserts that *none of us liveth to himself*. This is true

of them though it may not be true of others. The true Christian both lives and dies to the glory of his Master. This is his constant aim and concern, "to show forth the praises of him who hath called him out of darkness into His marvellous light." He serves God doing or suffering. There are many on the other hand who seem to live only to themselves. Their whole lives are marked by selfishness and self-seeking. If any one is benefited by their living it is not because of any intention on their part. And so living they die to themselves also, and are unwept and soon forgotten.

9. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

As the apostle has just been speaking of Christians living and dying it is natural to understand him as referring here to dead and living saints. He *died*, *rose*, *and lives again*, that He might be Head and Lord of His body, the church, whether the members be living or dead to us; they all live unto Him.

10. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Both sides in the controversy are here appealed to; the man who ate not, for judging his brother, and

the man who ate, for contemptuous treatment of his brother. There is no occasion for such conduct on either side since each one is responsible to God alone, Who will judge righteously, and He alone can fully understand each case.

We are informed in the scriptures that all judgment has been committed to the Son of God, so the judgment seat is that of Christ. There are two senses in which He is to judge the world: 1st, in the sense of governing it during the millennial reign; and 2nd, in the determination of the future destiny of men and angels, and in the distribution of rewards and punishments. The quotation here made seems to refer to Christ's reign when all His enemies will be compelled to acknowledge His rightful authority. The Greek word rendered "stand before" signifies to stand beside, to stand before, to stand by, so as to assist, etc. We are plainly taught that God's people are to assist in judging the world. It is declared that the saints shall judge the world (I Cor. VI–2) and it is promised them that they shall sit down with Christ in His throne. Judgment in the sense of the determination of our relation to God as condemned or acquitted, which decides our future destiny, is already begun, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." (I Pet. IV–17.) We are told further that "if we would judge ourselves,

we should not be judged." (I Cor. XI–31.) One of the works of judgment is to uncover and expose sin. Jesus declares that there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed nor hid that shall not be made known. It is declared that Christ will bring to light the hidden things of dishonesty; and in Rom. II–16 it is declared that He shall judge the secrets of men's hearts. But this work of uncovering sin may begin now, and does begin with every sincere penitent. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but who so confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." This is, no doubt, the reason why some souls professedly seeking God do not prosper or make progress; they persist in covering sin. God gives judgment light that we may see our sins and confess them. If we will uncover our sins God will cover them and they will be forgotten; they will be remembered no more forever. "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven and whose sins are covered." We do not have to wait until the wicked are judged to have the secrets of our hearts exposed. It may be done now. "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest." (I Cor. XIV–24, 25.) Here the work of judgment is going forward. In the future state saints shall be judged only

in the sense of being publicly indicated and approved. Judgment begins here in the house of God; it will culminate there. But there will be no public inquest into their lives; that takes place here. Here they uncover their shame and have it eternally hidden and forgotten.

13. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

Instead of finding fault with our brother about trifles, let us look to ourselves that our conduct is such that it will not be an occasion of stumbling to our brother. His prejudices must be considered, and his ignorance and weakness borne with.

14. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

What the Lord Jesus said about this matter, that what goes into the mouth does not defile the man, but that which comes out, is decisive upon this point. But the apostle probably refers to revelations of the truth which he had personally received. It follows that those who ate the meat were in the right, and those who refused it were in the wrong. The same principle holds good with regard to the keeping of days, as with regard to the making distinction in meats: both belong to Judaism. But a man may be easily in error in such matters without invalidating

his salvation. And so long as a thing seems wrong to me I cannot do it, though it may be innocent and harmless in itself: "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." My intention would be just as contrary to love as if the thing were actually sinful; and all sin, to a believer, is in the intention. Hence, the importance of being "fully persuaded in our own mind." We cannot do certain things because others do, seemingly with a good conscience. We must be convinced for ourselves. Each one must walk in his own light, and by his own conscience. No doubt, however, all limitations of our Christian liberty are injurious to us as well as dangerous. If we remain like little children, teachable, we will be guided into all truth, that truth which makes us free. The apostle avows himself afraid of some who observed days and months and times and years, lest he had bestowed upon them labor in vain; and spiritual men cannot but feel fear for those who appear to be attached to meats and drinks. Many gallant ships have gone to pieces upon these rocks.

15. But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.

It is not in accordance with love for me to grieve a brother knowingly in trivial matters. If I love him, I will avoid offense as far as I can with a

clear conscience. Since Jesus died to save him, I certainly ought not willingly to destroy him, that I might have my own way in so small a matter. The apostle declares, in another place, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world stands."

16. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

This injunction is to be understood in connection with what has preceded it, and not in a general sense. Christians are expected to be evil spoken of for Christ's sake, and they are not to seek to avoid this, but to rejoice in it. This cannot be prevented by any carefulness on our part. What is meant here is that we are not to so use our liberty in things of no vital importance as to shock the religious sensibilities of others not so well taught, and thus create scandal. Such conduct would have the appearance of evil, which we are to avoid.

17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

These outward things not being of the essence of Christ's religion, are not of enough importance to contend about, or to insist on. Christianity is a spiritual religion, and its essentials are in the heart. *Righteousness* or inward holiness is the essential thing in the religion of Jesus; and this is accompanied by

peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. If outward rites and carnal ordinances were essential parts of Christianity, then they should be contended for, and insisted upon; and we should see that others were properly observing them, as most professors of Christianity do. But as these outward things are of small importance, and not essential, there is no excuse for the divisions among nominal Christians, which are caused principally by differences over these matters. Thus, that which is essential is lost sight of in wrangling over trifles.

18. For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Serving God with a pure heart, he is approved of Him, and all his conduct flowing from love to God and man, he will be approved of men without regard to outward rites and ordinances. We are not to allow ourselves to be judged in meats and drinks, or in respect to a holy day, or anything of that nature; we are to refuse to acknowledge the validity of such judgment.

19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Instead of dwelling upon points of difference which are not material, and which will tend to produce discord and strife about words to no profit, let us rather consider those vital matters upon which we

agree, which will promote peace and unity among us. This is just what the warring sects of Christendom have not done, and the results of their folly and disobedience are plainly seen. Most men love their own opinions too well to sink them for the common good. And besides, not being spiritual, they exaggerate the importance of outward things, and variance, strife, and division result. There are few who agree with John Wesley when he says, "I am sick of opinions; my soul loathes the frothy stuff. If thy heart be with my heart as my heart is with thy heart, give me thy hand."

20. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

Love and unity among God's people is the work of God; and when these are destroyed by contention about rites and ordinances, or any other outward thing, the work of God is destroyed. The folly and wickedness of such a course should be easily apparent.

It is true that these distinctions of clean and unclean meats, as established by the law of Moses, are now abolished, and that nothing is impure that is fitted for human needs; and it is also true that no one is under any obligation to observe any such distinctions, so far as his own conscience is concerned; but still it may be evil to do this innocent thing,

since it may be done with offense. That is, it may be done in such a way, or at such a time, as to stumble a brother, and to cause him either to wound his own conscience by imitating our example, or by causing him to condemn us without scriptural grounds for so doing. Thus some things are lawful, that are not expedient.

21. It *is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

We have here laid down the general principle, then, that Christians should refrain from the doing of lawful things by which other Christians may be stumbled or injured. Among these lawful things are the eating of flesh and the drinking of wine. The eating of flesh is generally esteemed lawful, though there are some weak consciences or weak stomachs which confine others to a purely vegetable diet. The drinking of wine is, however, generally considered unlawful to Christians; but it is clear that St. Paul does not so think. It may be among the things inexpedient, but is certainly not among the things unlawful in the apostle's estimation. Modern reformers have gone to extremes in their crusade against the use of alcoholic beverages. While I do not practice, nor would I advise their use, I am bound to say that total abstinence is a modern doc-

trine, unknown to the New Testament writers. It is true that sinners make a bad use of these things, but so do they of food and raiment and every other good thing. Christians have control of their appetites, and are not under any bondage in these matters. They need refuse nothing that can be received with thanksgiving. The notion that Christians dare not use wine, even in the Eucharist, but must substitute water, appears to me a burlesque on the religion of Jesus. Christ turned water to wine, but modern Christians, in name, would turn wine into water, and teach their Lord a lesson in morals.

22. Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

That is, if you are convinced of the purity and lawfulness of these things, do not make a show or parade of your faith, especially where weak consciences are. You can deny yourself the exercise of your liberty for the good of others. If you possess this knowledge and feel this liberty, yet do not so use them as to destroy the work of God, and thus condemn yourself, happy art thou.

23. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

To do anything which one suspects to be wrong is to bring condemnation on one's conscience. I must

be fully convinced that a thing is right before I do it; otherwise I must give myself the benefit of the doubt by refraining. To do anything which I believe or suspect to be wrong is to sin. The sin is not therefore in the act, but in the intention, for the act may be lawful and innocent in itself, but if I esteem it to be wrong, it is wrong to me.

General Observations.

The contents of the foregoing chapter are very important and instructive, and it would be well for the cause of the Christian religion if its teachings had been always heeded. But this is far from being the case. In most instances sects of professed Christians have separated over differences of opinion about external and indifferent things. By so doing they have demonstrated that they love their own opinions more than they love their brethren, and more than they love God's cause. Jesus prays that His people may be one; but they are ready to rend the body of Christ for trivial causes. As unity is absolutely essential to growth, all growth has been prevented, and spiritual death has supervened. There is no excuse whatever for Christians, who agree in essentials, as Christians will do, to divide over things indifferent.

Although those who have faith, and who are more perfectly instructed, are required to use their liberty judiciously and charitably, it is not to be supposed that they must surrender their liberty to ignorance and prejudice. The whole church is not to be kept in bondage because a few persons are bound. The majority are right, and the others are in error. The prejudices of the weak must not be too rudely shocked, nor their consciences wounded, but it is to be expected that they will be teachable, and so will soon be delivered from their bondage to tradition. Otherwise the whole church would be kept at the lowest level consistent with salvation. The truth is not to be concealed, but is to be spoken in love, even the truth about indifferent things. Liberty is desirable and bondage dangerous, and God will Himself reveal the whole truth to those who are willing to learn, and thus, under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, unity of faith will be brought about.

CHAPTER XV.

1. We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

This certainly is a reasonable conclusion, but how seldom is it practiced. It is observed among those only who possess the love of the brethren. Among others it is as it is among worldly men; the weak must do the enduring; it is the fittest who survive. But love engenders tenderness toward the weak and a disposition to care for and protect them. The lambs are cared for as well as the sheep and even the lame are nursed and healed. No doubt this requires self-denial. It lays upon us the necessity of pleasing others rather than ourselves.

2. Let every one of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good to edification.

It may be asked, "Is it my duty to seek to please others?" Yes, if it can be done to his edification; if it will help to build him up in holiness; otherwise it is a matter of indifference. If we can do a man good by pleasing him rather than ourselves it is our duty to do so.

3. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

This quotation is from Ps. LXIX–9, and is spoken by David of himself, but the apostle here applies it to Christ, to whom it most eminently belongs. To endure for the sake of another is not to please ourselves. Christ did this for our sakes, and cannot we do it for the sake of our brethren?

4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

The Old Testament scriptures were all the scriptures possessed by the first Christians. These are said to have been *written for our learning*, and this statement, no doubt, applies to us as well as to them. They were diligently searched by them to find statements referring to Christ, and they found many which we should scarcely suspect of such meaning. Having the New Testament, we are not such diligent students of the Old. But their study will well repay the labor bestowed on them. It is true that they do not furnish us a standard of living, nor are we to measure ourselves by the characters therein described. Christians are of another spirit than that of Elijah or of any Old Testament believer. Yet understanding these things we may find many things to instruct us, since truth is here taught in symbol and allegory.

5. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

Had the apostle been as wise as many men now imagine themselves to be, he would have seen the futility of such a prayer; as it is now the general decision that likemindedness is impossible, and that those who expect such a thing are illogical dreamers, ignorant of the constitution of the human mind. But as both Christ and the apostle Paul pray for this, I must still hold to its possibility; especially since we are informed that it did once actually exist among the first Christians. Meanwhile let us strive for and expect this unanimity, carefully keeping the unity of the spirit that we may attain unto the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God. But we will never attain to this onemindedness by separating from our brother because of every, or any, difference of opinion about meats and drinks. This will carry us in the opposite direction, and produce such a bedlam of conflicting doctrines as will entitle us to the name of Babylon or confusion. God alone can bring peace and order out of such a chaos, but the *God of peace and consolation* can do even this. But this must be done *according to Christ Jesus.* Many men have attempted to perform the miracle in their own way and have failed. It cannot be done simply by reasonings and argumentation, but by the teachings and

guidance of the Holy Spirit. God alone can make men of one spirit, and He alone can make them of one mind and one soul.

6. That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When God's people think and speak the same things, they *glorify God with one mind and one mouth.* This unity is particularly pleasing to God and greatly to His glory; by it Christ's claims to the Messiahship are clearly demonstrated, for such a unity must be supernatural and of Divine origin.

7. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

As Christ received in such a manner and on such terms as brought glory to God, so should we receive one another. God is not glorified by contention and strife about words among His people, but by kindness, forbearance and oneness.

8. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

This seems to be an abrupt change of the subject; but if we can understand what was in the apostle's mind it may not appear so. No doubt the scruples of the Jewish Christians about meats and drinks were hard to be borne by those who were without their inherited prejudices. They appeared to the Gentile

converts to be often childish and foolish. We know, also, that the possession of such prejudices tends to make men uncharitable in their judgments. The Gentiles knowing that they were right and the others wrong in those matters, needed every incentive to help them to bear patiently with their Jewish brethren. The fact that the apostle calls them strong and the others weak, no doubt, was some help, and must have been correspondingly unpalatable to the Jewish believers; as those who are sticklers for trifles generally imagine themselves to be strong. As a further consideration which might assist to the same end, the apostle here refers to Christ's ministry among the Jews. He was not sent to the Gentiles but to the Jews. They had the promise of His coming, and His ministry among them confirmed the truth of these promises. As God thus regarded the Jews, and Christ confined His labors to their nation they certainly demanded consideration from the converted Gentiles. This seems to have been the thought in the mind of the writer, and so is just in line with what has gone before.

9. And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

These scriptures are quoted to show that although no promise had been made to their fathers, as in the case of the Jews, yet the Gentiles were also included in the merciful provisions made for the salvation of a lost race. Though the Jew had the first claim on God's mercy he had no greater nor surer claim than the Gentiles had.

13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Being assured, then, both Jew and Gentile, of your rights and privileges under the gospel, may you be *filled with all joy and peace in believing*. Such a result ought certainly to follow faith in such a gospel. But it will follow only as it is wrought in us by the *God of hope*. The Deity is here called the God of hope because He is the Author of hope. But for His mercy in providing a Redeemer, there would be nothing left us but despair. Joy and peace are the fruits of faith and hope, but this faith and hope, as well as the resultant joy and peace, must be wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. A faith and a hope not so produced is a dead faith and a false hope, and the resultant joy and peace are delusive. Our peace must be "the peace of God," and our joy must be

"joy in the Holy Ghost." These graces are all supernatural and heavenly.

14. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

This is a very high commendation, and proves that the church at Rome was in excellent spiritual condition. In no place in this letter does the apostle find any fault with this church, as he does with the church at Corinth and the churches in Galatia. It is true that St. Paul had never as yet visited Rome, but he, no doubt, was well informed of their spiritual state. He declares in the first place, that they were *full of goodness*. Some strong things are said of the holiness and perfection of the church of Christ in general, but this is, probably, the highest tribute paid to any particular congregation. The passage which some professed Christians are pleased to apply to themselves, "there is none good, no not one," will scarcely apply to these Roman disciples. It was said of the martyr Stephen that he was a good man, but these saints at Rome were full of goodness. There could therefore be no room left in them for sin. If there were no sin in them they must have been pure in heart, and devoid of carnality. Those, therefore, who imagine that in the first verse of the twelfth chapter the apostle urges them to attain to this state

of purity and holiness, must be in a mistake, as he testifies that they are already there. They are *also filled with all knowledge:* that is, spiritual knowledge necessary for them to possess. They are not ignorant of anything they need to know.

They are *able also to admonish one another.* Unlike those addressed in the Letter to the Hebrews, they themselves are competent to teach the gospel, and must therefore have been able to use strong meat, and were "of full age" (teleioi) or perfect ones. They were not such as needed milk.

15. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

Notwithstanding the fact that you are thus filled with knowledge and goodness and able to teach and advise one another, yet I have written unto you concerning things you already know, that I may remind you of them and impress them upon you. Christians need to be reminded again and again of the things they already know, that they may give the more earnest heed to them lest at any time they should let them slip. St. Peter calls this, stirring up their pure mind by way of remembrance.

16. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Since the grace of God had made him a minister of the gospel, especially to the Gentiles, he had done nothing except his duty in writing to them, though they were, many of them, strangers to him personally. He had not exceeded his authority and needed no apology. And because he knew their good spiritual state he had written the *more boldly*, not being afraid of injuring them by giving them strong meat, and being assured that they would be able to understand him, which some others were not. His object in writing was, since he was the apostle to the Gentiles, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable to God. He here represents the presentation of the saved Gentiles to God as being a sacrifice or oblation; and we know that no sacrifice was acceptable that was not perfect. It must not be lacking in the least particular, even in the tip of an ear. So the oblation of the Gentiles could not be acceptable unless it were *sanctified by the Holy Ghost*. This would make them complete in all the will of God, since they that are sanctified are said to be perfected forever; "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. X–14th.)

We see here the burden of a real minister of Christ. His one aim in his labors among God's people, is to present them a perfect offering to God. For this cause he is jealous over them with a godly jealousy

having espoused them to one husband, that he may present them with joy and not with grief. What he does for them is by constraint of the love of Christ. God pity the man who preaches for a livelihood, or for a reputation, or for any kindred reason. He is guilty of Simony and sacrilege, who usurps the holy office to serve his own ends.

17. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19. Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

The work of soul-saving, especially when accompanied by great demonstration of the Spirit, and power, is one in which its participants may well glory or rejoice. It is a blessed and soul-inspiring labor, accompanied by much hardship and suffering.

The apostle Paul is careful however not to claim the results of other men's labors, nor did he wish to enjoy them. He was ambitious to break new ground and to labor in untried fields; he wished himself to lay the foundation as well as to rear the superstructure. This was a worthy ambition, at that time easily gratified. But it is not always possible now, though the true man scorns to reap what others have sown and so far as possible avoids doing so.

20. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

21. But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

22. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

St. Paul's desire to preach only where Christ was not named had hitherto been a hindrance to his visiting Rome, as the gospel had already been preached in that city. But, no doubt many of his spiritual children were in Rome though the apostle Himself had never been there. Then, as since, all roads led to Rome; and it was being constantly visited by persons from all parts of the empire many of whom remained there. This made Rome common ground which could be exclusively claimed by no one. St. Paul had long entertained a desire to visit that city, to see his own converts and to have fruit among its inhabitants. Then there was probably more danger in preaching the gospel in Rome than in the provinces, and the apostle did not wish to appear to shrink from any danger. The reproach of the gospel was also greater in that centre of fashion, pleasure and luxury.

23. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24. Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be

brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

This epistle was written from Corinth where the apostle had been laboring, and where he felt no longer in duty bound to remain. It seems that he had planned a journey into Spain, the Western limit of the empire, and expected to stop in Rome on his way thither. But the journey into Spain was not made as he had planned and probably never was made. The journey to Rome was made, but under far different circumstances than he had planned. It is not well for us to plan too far ahead as we are likely to do so without Divine direction, and we will only invite disappointment.

25. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

26. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

It is not apparent why there should have been more poor saints at Jerusalem than in Greece, and possibly there were not. But St. Paul had been requested by the apostles at Jerusalem to remember the poor saints there, which he was forward to do. The probability is that this contribution about which he took so much care was intended as a sort of peace offering to the Jewish Christians. The believing Jews were averse to receiving the Gentile converts unless they

were first circumcised. This the apostle Paul strenuously resisted. This created a prejudice against the apostle, causing him to be regarded as a renegade Jew. He took great pains to raise a large contribution among the Gentile believers, to show to their Jewish brethren that they were not forgetful of their obligations to them, and that they recognized the unity of the Jewish and Gentile believers. The whole scheme however, miscarried through the fanaticism of the Jews at Jerusalem as we learn in the Acts of the Apostles. In attempting to placate the Jews there was danger of surrendering too far to their prejudices, and of compromising the truth itself. The attempt of St. Paul to conciliate the Jews by publicly observing the ceremonial law in the temple at Jerusalem, by the advice of the brethren, seems not to have met the Divine approval. It brought about the result he was endeavoring to avoid, and got him into one of the greatest dangers of his life, and made him a prisoner nearly four years. Those plans which natural prudence suggests, are not best calculated to advance the kingdom of God.

27. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

This is a general principle and applies not only to the duty of the Gentile converts to their Jewish

teachers but to the duty of all who are taught in the word to communicate to those who teach them in all good things. So they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel. The duty of those called and sent of God to preach is imperative, and the duty of those who are taught by them is equally imperative.

28. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

So man proposed, but God disposed otherwise. This visit to Spain seems to have been a cherished hope of the great apostle. He may have gone on to Spain after his release by Nero. Spain was held by the Carthaginians until after the second Punic war, when it gradually came into the possession of the Romans, and remained a province of that empire until its dissolution. Some of the apostles travelled to countries beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, preaching the gospel of Christ. St. Thomas is said to have been martyred in India. But St. Paul seems to have confined his labors within the limits of the Empire, unless we count Arabia outside of it.

29. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

This passage is, I think, generally misunderstood and misinterpreted. The Greek word (éulógias) translated "blessing" is usually interpreted to refer

to some blessing which the apostle had experienced or received. The word, however, signifies "praise, giving of thanks, bounty, almsgiving, etc." The English word "eulogy" is derived from it. The idea expressed by the word is of giving rather than of receiving. It is not a blessing that the apostle had received that he speaks of, but one that he will impart, bestow upon his hearers, as a bounty, a benediction. He expresses confidence that he will be fully able to impart to them the boon, the bounty of the gospel of Christ. There is in the apostle's language no boast concerning his personal experience, but a confident claim of an ability to accomplish the work to which he had a Divine call. This was a matter of much more importance to his hearers, than his own personal experience could have been. We may have received much from the Lord with little ability to impart blessing to others. The apostle, whose sufficiency was of God, was conscious of having this gift in its fulness, and so expresses himself.

30. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

31. That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

St. Paul was concerned for two things, that his service for the saints at Jerusalem might be pleasing

to them, and that he might escape from his enemies in that city. Knowing the inveterate prejudices of the Jewish Christians, and their zeal for the law, he feared that they might be unwilling to accept alms from Gentile converts. How plainly had "their table become a stumbling to them." I suppose that much must be excused in them because of the prejudices of their education, but their condition is certainly not very hopeful. Contrasted with the charity and liberality of the Gentile Christians, they suffer much by the comparison. A Gentile is not probably able to put a proper estimate upon their spiritual state, but they could not have been used to any advantage in evangelizing the world. The other apostles could dwell in Jerusalem, but St. Paul's life was not safe there, and he knew that he visited that city at his peril. This was the case for several reasons. Probably his defection from Judaism, after having been himself a prominent persecutor, made him especially obnoxious. But the principal reason, no doubt, was that after such defection, being chosen of God as the apostle to the Gentiles, he discarded the restrictions of the ceremonial law, and would not allow it to be imposed upon the Gentile Christians. This in the eyes of the Jews made him appear as an apostate, who was not fit to live. Peter and John, and perhaps the other apostles, saw the propriety of this line of

action, but being sent to the circumcision they were not called upon to take this stand themselves, which accounts for the fact that they were not so much hated. Then, St. Paul was recognized as being pre-eminent in both ability and zeal, and was therefore considered the most dangerous foe of Judaism. St. Paul had also the clearest and most comprehensive knowledge of the principles of Christ's religion. He was able the most fully to divest himself of the prejudices of education and training. He had the courage of his convictions and a zeal which nothing could quench. He had the constructive faculty which the others lacked. In his comprehension Christianity became a system, and not a number of detached truths. All these things made him the foremost exponent of the new religion, and the inveterate foe of all compromise. So Jerusalem, the abode of his early manhood, where he had studied at the feet of Gamaliel, that most eminent doctor of the law, was no longer a safe place for him, and he besought the brethren at Rome to strive in prayer for his deliverance from his enemies there. And so far as we can know, the prayer was answered. The offering was probably acceptable to the saints at Jerusalem, and the apostle was delivered from his Jewish enemies by the Roman soldiers, who were the exponents of law and order.

32. That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33. Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

The success of his mission to Jerusalem and his deliverance from his enemies, would relieve him from a great responsibility as well as from a great danger; thus with joy he would be enabled to turn again to the work of preaching the gospel in distant regions, and to visit Rome as he had planned. So he read the future in his imagination. He did indeed visit Rome, but as a prisoner; though he might have gone as a free man if he had not appealed his case to Cæsar. He was refreshed at his first meeting with the Roman brethren at Appii Forum.

The last verse of this chapter contains an apostolic benediction.

General Observations.

It is an astonishing circumstance that the one apostle who never saw the Lord Jesus when He was on earth, and who had none of the advantages and benefits of personal association with Him, who had never listened to His teachings nor seen His miracles, should have been so supereminent in labors, and in success in gospel work. It is just the thing we should not have expected. His work made a greater impression

upon his own age than that of all the others combined, and has been immeasurably more potent in succeeding ages. It is an interesting, though perhaps an unprofitable query, as to what the Christian age would have been without St. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles. Of the labors of the great majority of the apostles we have no account but dim tradition. James the Greater soon lost his life, and of the others we have no account except of Peter, John, and James the Less. And it is principally through the writings they have left that we know anything of them, after the first few years succeeding Pentecost. No doubt those who left no history did noble work for the Master, but its results have been wholly lost. James, called The Less, the son of Alpheus, confined his labors to Jerusalem and the region round about, and is said to have suffered martyrdom there. As he labored among the Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem dissipated the effects of his labors. Peter and John were more prominent and useful than any of their associates in the apostolic college during the life of Christ. Their labors were great and their work successful. The epistles they have left are important and instructive, but do not compare in importance with those of St. Paul. There are several things which conspired to give the Tarsian his pre-eminence. I think we may reckon as first, his great natural

ability. Peter and John had good natural parts, but Paul had a towering intellect, one of the greatest in history. Then St. Paul was the only educated man among the apostles. It cannot be denied that great parts and mental training are as useful in gospel work as elsewhere, if fully subordinated to the grace of God. Again, St. Paul being the apostle to the Gentiles, had a more promising field of labor than those had who labored principally among the Jews. It was a difficult task to make strong Christians out of Jews, it being almost impossible for them to divest themselves of their predilection for carnal ordinances. With the Gentiles it was different. In a subordinate sense, the celibacy of the apostle Paul was an advantage in his work. He had no home ties, no family responsibilities to distract him from his work. St. Paul was not a great orator, though an effective speaker. It is doubtful whether great powers of oratory are effective in gospel work. Oratory powerfully affects the sensibilities and the imagination, but its effects are not lasting. Probably the untiring zeal of the apostle was one of the greatest factors in his success as a preacher. These things all taken together may not fully account for the great apostle's superiority, but they all conspire to that end.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

The city of Corinth in the lower Pelopennesus was situated between two gulfs, but was not itself a seaport. Cenchrea was its seaport on the East, and was about seven miles distant from it. Here a church had been formed, of which Phebe was a deaconess, or servant. As Paul was at Corinth, and as this sister was about to visit Rome, on some business, the apostle sent his letter by her. Deaconesses were women who gave their whole time to service for the church. They waited on, and so, "washed the saints' feet," nursed the sick, and distributed among the destitute the provisions set aside for them. They were usually women who were without children or other relatives to provide for them. Timothy was instructed not to receive young widows as deaconesses, as they would probably break their vows and marry again, which it was better that they should do. As these older widows who were friendless were a charge on the church, they gave it all their service.

2. That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also.

This admonition to receive this deaconess *as becometh saints*, meant in the first place that they should treat her with chastity. The morals of the people in general were abominable, and in Rome there were scarcely any left, except among the Christians. Chastity was an unknown virtue. Even the Vestal Virgins, who were regarded by the Romans as peculiarly pure and holy, were generally prostitutes. Under such a state of things, an unprotected female ran great hazard in travelling. So much the more was there need of purity among Christians. It meant, in the second place, hospitality. This virtue also was rare, and was especially recommended to God's people. They were commanded to "use hospitality without grudging," and to "be not forgetful to entertain strangers." This hospitality the saints practiced, especially toward each other, and so remarkable was this, that the pagans could not understand nor account for it except on the supposition of conspiracy; and because of their hospitality toward each other, they were charged with having designs against the state.

They were also requested to assist her in the transaction of any business she had in Rome, and a par-

ticular reason given why such courtesy should be shown her was the fact of past usefulness and faithfulness, of which the apostle declares that he himself had personal experience.

3. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

St. Paul first met these two saints at Corinth. Aquila was a Jew, born in Pontus, and it is probable that his wife was a Jewess. They had left Italy because the emperor Claudius had banished all Jews from Rome. They accompanied Paul to Ephesus, a city in Asia Minor, and while there, instructed Apollos in the ways of the Lord. They had now returned to Rome. We notice the strange circumstance that the woman's name is mentioned before that of her husband, which would indicate that she was the more able and useful of the two. She seems to have been a great favorite of St. Paul, as is shown by his giving her the diminutive of her name in II Tim. IV–19th, where he calls her Prisca, a mark of great affection. Here again he mentions her before her husband. St. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, mentions Aquila first whenever he speaks of them. St. Paul here calls them *helpers*. They were not preachers in the common sense of the term, but religious teachers, and very zealous for the gospel.

4. Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto

whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

St. Paul had made his home with this holy family more than a year at Corinth, because they were of the same craft, tentmakers; for the apostle had determined in his own mind not to be chargeable to the church at Corinth, and so labored with his own hands for a livelihood. Afterward they accompanied him on his travels as far as Ephesus, where he left them. But we do not know when it was they periled their lives for him.

5. Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epænetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

As there were as yet no special houses erected for the meeting places of Christians, they met in private houses or other convenient places. The residence of Priscilla and Aquila was one of these meeting places in Rome. No doubt there were others. The gospel had its greatest triumphs in the absence of such conveniences as are now thought to be indispensable to great success. Achaia was that Roman province of which Athens was the capital or chief city. Epænetus is here said to be the first convert in that province. But in I Cor. XVI–15th verse, the household of Stephanas is said by the apostle to have been the first fruits of Achaia. There are two ways of accounting for this

discrepancy. One is, that Epænetus was of the household of Stephanas. It is not said that Stephanas himself was the first fruits of Achaia, but his household. Another explanation is that the text is incorrect. We are told by those who are acquainted with the facts, that several manuscripts and some of the ancient Christian fathers have it "Asia" instead of Achaia. This is probably the true reading, and removes the difficulty.

6. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us.

We know nothing further of this sister, nor do we know anything of the labor she bestowed upon the apostle, but he has embalmed her name forever in the sacred records.

7. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

These were probably husband and wife; it would be more proper to render it "relatives" than "kinsmen," as one was a woman. As they were converted before the apostle was, and consequently before the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles, they must have been Jews, though they have Latin names. Some conjecture that in calling them kinsmen the apostle means only that they were Israelites, whom he declares to be "his kinsmen according to the flesh." Most probably though they were more

nearly related to him. They were old disciples, and seem to have been well known in the church.

8. Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

Nothing is known further of this disciple than that he was highly esteemed by St. Paul.

9. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*.

11. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

12. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord.

13. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

Three women are here spoken of as laboring in the Lord. Just in what manner they labored we are not told; but both men and women in apostolic times engaged in the work of the gospel. The women evidently spoke in public, at least in the assembly of the saints. They may be said to have preached or prophesied. But no woman, so far as we can learn, was especially called of God to the work of an evangelist, nor was any woman made pastor over any church or congregation. We are not told the necessary qualifications of a woman pastor or bishop, as there were none then, nor are there any now, called of God to such an office.

Rufus' mother is here called Paul's also; but it is

not probable that Paul and Rufus were sons of the same mother. It might be understood that Rufus' mother had treated Paul as a son; in other words, had been like a mother to him.

14. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

This would indicate that here was another congregation besides the one meeting in the house of Priscilla and Aquila. It is not clear in what other sense the expression, "the brethren which are with them" can be used. Rome was a very large city, and the saints there may have met in several different places.

15. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

16. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

I do not think we are to understand, as some do, that the apostle is instructing the believers to salute one another with a kiss. This was a custom which they observed, and there was nothing peculiar or meritorious in it. The point in the injunction is the kind of kiss they were to give each other. It was to be *an holy kiss*. Its holiness must arise from the state of heart of the giver. It was not to be hypocritical, like the kiss Judas gave his Master, but sincere, honest and pure. Whatever our manner of

salutation may be, it should be of the same nature, and thus we obey this injunction.

17. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

It is unavoidable that offences will arise. Some who fail to become really saved will insinuate themselves among God's children for a time, or some may fall from the grace of God; and such are likely to become a cause of division among God's people if not detected. Hence the necessity of constant vigilance among saints, that such persons may be recognized and dealt with before they can do harm. They are spoken of in Heb. XII–15th as "roots of bitterness," and in the next verse as "profane persons," that is, common persons, such as are not spiritual, but earthly minded and sordid. It is astonishing how soon such will become occasions of division and strife. Their aims are selfish; and though they may be, in general, well meaning persons, they naturally incline to cause cliques and parties that may sympathize and agree with themselves.

18. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

The apostle does not give sectaries much credit for good intentions, though it is true that they may

deceive themselves into the belief that they are animated by a zeal for God and truth. But whatever such persons may think, we are here assured that those who cause divisions contrary to the teachings of the scriptures, do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything that divides real Christians from each other, and thus weakens the bonds of union among them, is contrary to the doctrine that we have received. The division allowed and insisted upon in the scriptures, is between saints and sinners. Said God to the prophet, "If thou take the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." But modern theologians apologize for, and justify, division among believers, and at the same time decry all efforts to separate the precious from the vile, considering all attempts of this kind to be impracticable and fanatical. Is not this surely a perverted gospel? Nearly all divisions among professed Christians are over differences of opinion on outward things, "meats and drinks" which are no part of the kingdom of God, and concerning which we are forbidden to contend. But divisions tend to serve the bellies of those who promote them, but they burden the victims of their deception as did the Jewish lawyers.

These promoters of division do not avow their selfish intentions, but use *good words and fair speeches*. They claim great zeal for the kingdom of

God, while it is their own sect alone that they are interested in; and to build a sect is to tear down the kingdom of God. Yet the *simple* ones, those without much knowledge of spiritual things, who are unsuspicious and do not look below the surface of things, are deceived by such teachers. Real saints are instructed to mark them, and to avoid them.

19. For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

The Roman church had a good reputation among the other churches for faithfulness. For this the apostle expresses joy. He finds no fault with them, which speaks well for their purity. His desire for them is that they might be wise in good things, and simple or ignorant concerning evil things. To remain thus it would be necessary for them to shut their eyes to much that was transpiring around them. There are some things which are very profitable for us to know. We can never know too much of those things that are revealed to us by the Spirit of God. We can never know too much of the truth of God. But we can well say with the poet,

> "Other knowledge I disdain—
> 'Tis all but vanity."

There are many things in this evil world that we should not seek to know, and should even refuse to

know; they are not worth knowing, or are likely to do us harm if we know them. It is true that purity is not easily contaminated, but safety is assured only by our avoiding unnecessary temptation. The propriety of decent people visiting the vile dens of iniquity to do good, a practice called "slumming," is at least questionable. It is doubtful if any good results. It is not the way to keep simple concerning evil.

20. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

To what special event the apostle here refers, if to any one, it is probably impossible to determine. Some suppose him to refer to their deliverance from schismatics who cause divisions. But they were never delivered for any great length of time from such foes. To *bruise Satan under their feet*, would be to give them a great and permanent triumph over him. This was afterward realized when paganism was overthrown and Christianity established as the lawful religion of the empire. This victory is described in Revelation as the casting out of the great red dragon, "that old serpent who is called the devil and Satan." In this event Satan was certainly bruised under their feet; and it is the only event in their history which seems to adequately fulfil the

prophecy. It is true that it occurred more than two hundred years afterward, but in prophecy two centuries are a short time.

This verse seems to end the letter, and what follows is in the nature of a postscript.

21. Timotheus my workfellow, Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

Timothy is reputed to have been bishop or pastor of the church in Ephesus. The apostle in his first letter to Timothy, speaks of having besought him to remain at Ephesus, when he himself went into Macedonia. He seems to have been with Paul at Corinth at the time when the epistle to the Romans was written. He was a young man and greatly beloved by St. Paul, who was acquainted with his mother and grandmother. He travelled extensively with St. Paul, and was probably at Rome when the great apostle suffered martyrdom. St. Paul left him in Ephesus at one time to suppress heresies, but there is no proof but tradition that he was ever settled there.

Lucius is the same name as Luke, and it is supposed that the author of the gospel, and of the Acts of the Apostles is here meant. Jason is mentioned in Acts XVII, as having received the apostle into his house at Thessalonica. This is probably the same person. Sosipater is mentioned in Acts

XX–4th, where his name is Sopater. He was a Berean.

22. I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

It seems that St. Paul dictated this epistle and that Tertius wrote it. We know nothing further concerning him. The name signifies "third," and may have been given him because he was the third child, or the third son.

23. Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Gaius is the Greek form of the Latin name Caius. In Acts XIX–29th, one Gaius is mentioned as a Macedonian, who travelled with Paul, and who was seized by the mob at Ephesus. It is probable he is the brother here mentioned. He seems to have kept open house for the saints, as he is called the host of the whole church, keeping a kind of saints' hotel. He probably was a man of means to be able to show such hospitality. Erastus is called chamberlain or treasurer of the city of Corinth. The probability is that he did not then hold that office, but had formerly done so, as in Acts XIX–22nd he is mentioned as one of the travelling companions of St. Paul, which could not have been so if he had been city treasurer. Quartus may have been a brother of Tertius, but

probably the word is used in its spiritual sense. Quartus means "fourth." We read in the Acts also of Secundus, meaning "second." These names may have been common among the Romans.

24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Tertius is probably the author, as well as the writer of the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th verses, as they close with a benediction similar to the apostles, which he would not have repeated so soon. There is some controversy among critics concerning this verse, but it is not of general interest.

25. Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26. But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Christ's religion *establishes* those who possess it, in the sense that they are not wavering and changeable in their zeal and fidelity, as were God's ancient people. But they are much more in danger of deception by Satan's beguilements, and more liable to yield to the seduction of the world and the devil, until experience brings them increased knowledge, and suffering endured teaches them submission to the will

of God. By these things they are established in the gospel.

The *mystery* here mentioned is the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. The word does not signify anything hard to understand, but rather something secret or hidden. We are told in one place that this mystery is "Christ in us the hope of glory." The experience of a child of God, of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and the perfection of nature resulting from the new birth, were matters entirely unknown to those of former dispensations. These things were *kept secret since the world began*. How strange that this is not understood, since it is so plainly stated. It is true that they are promised in the writings of the prophets, but neither the prophets themselves nor their readers knew or understood what was meant. But now these things are *made manifest* whenever the real gospel is preached, and have been so made manifest since the first sermon at Pentecost. The apostles and first preachers proved those doctrines from the *scriptures of the prophets*, as there was then no New Testament written.

The obedience required in the gospel is faith in Christ, without any mixture of the works of the law.

27. To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

There may be on other planets creatures who like the elect angels, can bring God glory directly by perfect obedience, but man can bring Him glory only through Jesus Christ.

General Observations.

It is noticeable that St. Paul in his letter to the Romans makes no mention of St. Peter. The Romanists claim that he was bishop of Rome, and primate of the universal church. It is unreasonable to suppose that if St. Peter was in Rome, and the leader there, that he would not be mentioned when greeting was sent to so many of the brethren there. Nor would Paul presume to give directions for the government of the church if Peter was bishop there. It would have been an impertinence. It is plain that the apostle Peter was not in Rome at the time this letter was written, nor is there any proof that he was ever in that city. His bishopric there, and his primacy, rest upon traditions and assumptions that have little weight with reasonable and unprejudiced men.

THE END.